

**General Assembly**Distr.: General
27 August 2014

Original: English

Sixty-ninth session

Item 131 of the provisional agenda*

Programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015**Twelfth annual progress report on the implementation of
the capital master plan****Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

The twelfth annual progress report on the implementation of the capital master plan is submitted pursuant to section II, paragraph 34, of General Assembly resolution 57/292. The report provides an update on the status of the project since the issuance (A/68/352/Add.2 and 3) in February 2014 of the updates to the eleventh annual progress report and responds to requests contained in section IV, paragraph 14, of Assembly resolution 68/247 A, and in section VII, paragraphs 7, 8, 10, 13, 15 and 17, of Assembly resolution 68/247 B.

In the last full year of construction, the capital master plan will begin to draw to a close with the completion and occupancy of the General Assembly Building in September 2014. All the other major portions of the project are already completed, including the renovation and reoccupancy of the Secretariat Building and Conference Building, the replacement of major infrastructure in the basements and the enhanced security upgrades initiative to strengthen the eastern and western perimeters of the United Nations Headquarters. The renovation phase of the capital master plan will be completed in 2014.

Following the completion of the renovation phase of the project, the remaining work, reflecting approximately 1 per cent of the budget, will be to complete post-renovation activities and to close out the project. Project post-renovation and close-out will continue under the management of the Office of the Capital Master Plan until the Office is disbanded in June 2015, and thereafter by the Office of Central Support Services. The post-renovation construction activities are comparatively simple in scope and include the removal of the temporary North Lawn Building, final landscaping and the security-related work at 42nd and 48th Streets. These works will

* A/69/150.



be contracted by the Office of the Capital Master Plan before 30 June 2015 and any activities ongoing after that date will be completed by the Office of Central Support Services by the end of 2016, as discussed in paragraph 26 of the present report. Moreover, the remaining contractual and financial close-out of the renovation activities will be undertaken in the close-out phase by the Office of the Capital Master Plan until June 2015, and thereafter by the Office of Central Support Services.

The Secretary-General considers that it is not necessary to maintain a dedicated project team after June 2015 and that the last remaining close-out activities should be mainstreamed into the Organization as part of the responsibilities of the Office of Central Support Services.

The cost of all the post-renovation construction and close-out activities will be met from within the existing approved resources of the capital master plan project.

The financial position of the project remains consistent with the projection presented in the update to the eleventh annual progress report (A/68/352/Add.2), after taking account of the decisions of the General Assembly in December 2013 and April 2014.

As at 30 June 2014, the cost to complete the capital master plan project was projected to be \$2,215.0 million, as compared with the approved resources amounting to \$2,150.0 million. Approved resources comprise the original budget and donations of \$1,990.6 million, plus interest income and the working capital reserve fund of \$159.4 million. The scope of the capital master plan remains unchanged, although all approved funding in the amount of \$2,150.0 million is being applied to ongoing active renovation activities and contracts. Renovation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building, the original cost of which was estimated to be \$65.0 million, remains suspended because of security concerns, as reported to the General Assembly during its sixty-eighth session.

In accordance with resolutions 68/247 A and B, the cash balance of \$150.0 million (as at 30 June 2014) is being used to make payments for active contractual obligations and project commitments under the project's current scope.

As at 30 June 2014, the estimated cost of activities associated with the capital master plan amounted to \$139.8 million and the cost of the secondary data centre borne by the capital master plan amounted to \$15.0 million (net of the \$4.2 million contribution from the support account for peacekeeping operations). These activities were not included in the original scope or budget of the capital master plan. In summary, the consolidated project requirements amount to \$2,369.8 million.

In its resolution 68/247 B, the General Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to make use of the Working Capital Fund and the Special Account established by the Assembly in its resolution 3049a (XXVII) as a bridging mechanism to address possible cash flow challenges resulting from the prior capital master plan financing of the associated costs and the cost of the secondary data centre. The Administration anticipates that it will have recourse to the Working Capital Fund and Special Account by October 2014.

The General Assembly, in section VII, paragraph 12, of resolution 68/247 B, recognized the need to fund the budget shortfalls, including those related to associated costs, on the basis of project costs provided by the Secretary-General in the twelfth annual progress report and that a decision on the final appropriation would be required at the main part of the sixty-ninth session.

With regard to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building, a decision by the General Assembly that takes into account the perimeter security concerns will be required on the long-term relocation of the functions currently housed by both buildings.

I. Overview

1. Approaching completion in a few months, the capital master plan is the largest and most comprehensive construction and renovation project undertaken by the United Nations. The benefits of the project can now be experienced in the three main buildings at Headquarters — the Secretariat, Conference and General Assembly Buildings. The project has met its original goals, which included providing a safe, modern and accessible environment for delegates, staff and visitors.
2. Planning for the project commenced in 1999 and the renovation phase began in 2008. It will be completed in late 2014, with the closure of the Office of the Capital Master Plan in 2015. The post-renovation construction activities, which will require close coordination between the Office of the Capital Master Plan and the Office of Central Support Services as discussed in paragraph 26 below, will be completed in late 2016. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit annual reports on the project's progress and schedule, projected cost to completion and financial status. The present report is the twelfth such report to the Assembly.
3. Since the issuance of the update to the eleventh annual progress report in February 2014 (A/68/352/Add.2 and 3), renovation work on remaining portions of the project has proceeded on schedule, including the substantial completion of the General Assembly Building less than four months later than indicated in the schedule included in the tenth annual progress report (A/67/350), developed in mid-2012, despite the unforeseeable obstacles following storm Sandy, which impacted the United Nations Headquarters compound in October 2012. The commencement of renovations on the General Assembly Building was delayed by several months owing to the effects of the storm on the renovation of the Conference Building.
4. As at 30 June 2014, the expected project cost to complete the capital master plan remained at \$2,214.97 million. In accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/247 A, the scope of the capital master plan project remains unchanged and the renovation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building remains within that scope, originally estimated at \$65.0 million, although all funding available in the amount of \$2,150.0 million is being applied to ongoing active renovation activities and contracts.
5. The remaining cash balance of \$150.0 million (as at 30 June 2014) is being used for active contracts to make payments for construction work completed and other project commitments, such as staff costs and operating expenses.
6. With regard to associated costs and the cost of the secondary data centre, it will be recalled that such activities were not included in the original project scope and hence were not included in the budget approved for the capital master plan project. The estimated resource requirements for associated costs were approved by the General Assembly on an annual basis. The Assembly approved the establishment and financing of the secondary data centre in its resolutions 63/269 and 64/228.
7. At the request of the General Assembly, every effort was made to absorb the associated costs and the cost of the secondary data centre within the approved budget of the capital master plan project (see resolution 68/247 A, section IV, paragraph 21), but this did not prove feasible.

8. As at 30 June 2014, the estimated cost of activities associated with the capital master plan amounted to \$139.8 million. The final cost of the secondary data centre has not changed. As reported previously, the cost of establishing the secondary data centre was \$19.2 million. The General Assembly decided that the support account for peacekeeping operations would contribute \$4.2 million to the cost of establishing the centre. Consequently, the net cost that was borne by the capital master plan cash funds was \$15.0 million. The aggregate cost of these activities, which were not provided for in the scope or budget of the capital master plan, amount to \$154.8 million.

9. The following sections of the present report respond to the requests contained in the two resolutions pertaining to the capital master plan adopted by the General Assembly during its sixty-eighth session, that is, paragraph 14 of resolution 68/247 A and section VII, paragraphs 7, 8, 10, 13, 15 and 17 of resolution 68/247 B.

II. Project strategy and status

10. The renovation phase of the project commenced in 2008 and will be substantially completed in 2014, with the renovation of the General Assembly Building. The financial close-out of the project's renovation activities, as well as final landscaping and the removal of the temporary North Lawn Building, will take place in 2015. The security-related work at 42nd and 48th Streets is anticipated to start in 2015, but will not be completed until 2016, as discussed in paragraph 19 below.

11. The total project budget for the capital master plan in the amount of \$1,876.7 million was approved by the General Assembly in December 2006, in its resolution 61/251. The decision was based on the selection of Secretary-General's recommended strategy IV, which was approved by the Assembly in December 2007 in its resolution 62/87, with no increase in the approved project budget it had approved the previous year.

12. Accelerated strategy IV and the enhanced security upgrade funded by a contribution from the host country required many tasks, of which the following have been completed as at the date of submission of the present report:

- (a) Leasing and fitting out off-site office swing space;
- (b) Moving office functions to swing space;
- (c) Renovating the Secretariat Building in its entirety;
- (d) Reoccupying the Secretariat Building;
- (e) Constructing a temporary building on the North Lawn for conferences, related support and certain offices;
- (f) Emptying the Conference Building by relocating meetings to the temporary North Lawn Building;
- (g) Renovating the Conference Building in its entirety, including the enhanced security upgrade subproject to strengthen the building;
- (h) Returning conferences and offices to the Conference Building;
- (i) Altering the temporary North Lawn Building to merge two rooms into a single space for an interim General Assembly Hall;

(j) Substantial completion of construction for the renovation of the General Assembly Building;

(k) Completion and utilization of the new south screening building;

(l) Completion of the installation of bollards and other security devices on First Avenue between 42nd and 45th Streets and 47th to 48th Streets.

13. Although still ongoing, the following tasks will be completed in late 2014, prior to the adjournment of the main part of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly:

(a) Final completion of construction of the General Assembly Building;

(b) Final completion of the north screening building and installation of bollards and other security devices on First Avenue between 45th and 47th Streets.

III. Progress since the update by the Secretary-General to the eleventh annual progress report

A. Progress on renovation work

14. Work undertaken since the update to the eleventh annual progress report in February 2014 was performed on budget and on schedule.

15. On 26 February 2014, the Secretariat opened the new south screening building at the staff entrance on First Avenue between 42nd and 43rd Streets. During the course of February through June 2014, additional progress was made on construction activity outside the United Nations property line on the western perimeter, including the installation of bollards and other security devices, and the phased reopening of replaced sidewalk from 42nd Street northwards to 44th Street.

16. The renovation work on the General Assembly Building began in June 2013, following the reconfiguration of the temporary North Lawn Building to house the interim General Assembly Hall, a step which followed the completion of the renovation of the Conference Building.

17. The sequence of construction activities on the General Assembly Building consisted of the demolition and removal of selected materials, including asbestos-containing materials; the removal of the old glass curtain walls; the installation of new mechanical, electrical and plumbing equipment and connections; the installation of new glass curtain walls; the removal and reconstruction of weather protection and cladding on the dome; the reconstruction of interiors, including ceilings, wall coverings and flooring; the installation of electronics in support of the conferencing function; and many other tasks.

B. Relocations from swing space and lease terminations

18. As at 25 January 2014, the swing space portion of the capital master plan was completed, with financial and operational responsibility for off-campus swing space having been concluded through the termination of all lease obligations from the budget of the capital master plan. The Office of Central Support Services is responsible for the management of all Headquarters off-campus and on-campus

space, except for areas still under construction under the capital master plan (namely, the General Assembly Building and portions of the basements which will be completed by the end of 2014). Table 1 below provides a summary extract of the lease details shown in table 1 of the eleventh annual progress report (A/68/352). Unchanged since the update to that report is the status of the Albano Building and the United Nations Federal Credit Union Building: the Albano Building lease continues until the end of July 2017, at which time it will be either extended or terminated, on the basis of the longer-term office accommodation strategy, and the lease of the United Nations Federal Credit Union Building has been retained for the functions of the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the Office of Human Resources Management.

Table 1
Swing space lease details

<i>Building</i>	<i>Lease commencement</i>	<i>Lease expiration</i>
380 Madison Avenue	29 February 2008	25 January 2014
730 Third Avenue (Teachers Building)	30 June 2009	31 December 2013
305 East 46th Street (Albano Building)	24 July 2007	23 July 2017
United Nations Federal Credit Union Building, Long Island City	14 February 2008	30 April 2018

IV. Project schedule

19. The capital master plan has maintained the overall schedule reported in table 2 of the update to the eleventh annual progress report (A/68/352/Add.2). The current status is presented in table 2 below. The construction on the General Assembly Building was substantially completed as at the date of submission of the present report and the building is projected to be ready to accommodate the functions of the general debate in September 2014. Additional final completion work will continue until the end of 2014. Construction activity for the remaining work relating to security on First Avenue and on 42nd and 48th Streets was set to be completed within 2014, but continued delays in the permitting process by the host city will mean the work on 42nd and 48th Streets will be completed by late 2016, as discussed in paragraph 26 below. As discussed in section V below, the limited nature of the remaining post-renovation work can be accomplished by the Office of Central Support Services following the closure of the Office of the Capital Master Plan, as the scope of the remaining work will be comparatively straightforward and does not warrant a construction manager and a dedicated project team.

20. Renovation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building remains suspended because of security concerns, as reported to the General Assembly during its sixty-eighth session.

21. The temporary North Lawn Building will be demolished in accordance with the mandated scope of the project. At present, the building is still partially occupied and the coordination of new locations for the functions to be relocated must be resolved

by the Office of the Capital Master Plan within the leasing and office space strategies of the Office of Central Support Services. The management of the demolition of the temporary North Lawn Building and the subsequent landscaping activities will be initiated and contracted by the Office of the Capital Master Plan in early 2015 and will likely be completed by the Office of Central Support Services by the end of 2015 in accordance with arrangements described in paragraph 26 below.

Table 2
Projected schedule of the capital master plan

Activity	As set out in A/62/364		As set out in A/63/477		As set out in A/64/346		As set out in A/65/511		As set out in A/66/527		As set out in A/67/330		Current projection		Status
	Start	Complete	Start	Complete	Start	Complete	Start	Complete	Start	Complete	Start	Complete	Start	Complete	
Construction of North Lawn Building	Early 2008	Mid- 2009	Early 2008	Mid- 2009	Mid- 2008	Late 2009	Mid- 2008	Late 2009	Mid- 2008	Late 2009	Mid- 2008	Late 2009	Mid- 2008	Late 2009	Completed
Secretariat Building	Early 2009	Early 2012	Early 2009	Early 2012	Late 2009	Mid- 2012	Early 2010	Mid- 2012	Early 2010	Mid- 2012	Early 2010	Mid- 2012	Early 2010	Mid- 2012	Completed
Conference Building	Mid- 2009	Mid- 2011	Mid- 2009	Mid- 2011	Late 2009	Late 2011	Early 2010	Early 2012	Early 2010	Late 2012	Early 2010	Late 2012	Early 2010	Early 2013	Completed
General Assembly Building	Mid- 2011	Mid- 2013	Mid- 2011	Mid- 2013	Late 2011	Late 2013	Early 2012	Late 2013	Early 2013	Mid- 2014	Early 2013	Mid- 2014	Mid- 2013	Mid- 2014	On track for completion as in the schedule set out in A/68/352/ Add.2
South Annex Building	Early 2011	Early 2012	Early 2011	Early 2012	Late 2011	Early 2013	Early 2012	Mid- 2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	Suspended
Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building	Early 2012	Early 2013	Early 2012	Early 2013	Early 2013	Late 2013	Early 2012	Late 2013	-	-	-	-	-	-	Suspended
Completion of renovation of United Nations Headquarters	Early 2008	Mid- 2013	Early 2008	Mid- 2013	Late 2008	Late 2013	Mid- 2008	Late 2013	Mid- 2008	Mid- 2014	Mid- 2008	Mid- 2014	Mid- 2008	Late 2014	
Closure of the Office of the Capital Master Plan and handover to the Office of Central Support Services															
Demolition of temporary North Lawn Building and final landscaping														Mid- 2015	
Security-related work at 42nd and 48th Streets														Early 2015	Late 2015
														Early 2015	Late 2016

V. Plans for the close-out of the capital master plan and administration of remaining scope

22. In section VII, paragraph 7, of its resolution 68/247 B, the General Assembly urged the Secretary-General to confirm the timing of the closure for the Office of the Capital Master Plan and to report, in the context of the twelfth annual progress report on the plans for the management and supervision of the work remaining after the closure of the Office, including the accountability mechanisms that will be put in place.

23. In response to the request for confirmation on the timing of the closure, the Secretary-General advises that it is not necessary to maintain a dedicated project team after June 2015. At that time, the Office of the Capital Master Plan will be closed and the last remaining close-out activities will be mainstreamed into the Administration as part of the responsibilities of the Office of Central Support Services in the Department of Management. There will be close coordination between the two Offices during the transition period up to 30 June 2015 in order to ensure a smooth and comprehensive handover of all responsibilities for the United Nations Headquarters Buildings to the Administration.

24. After June 2015, responsibility for certain post-renovation construction activities that are within the original project scope, together with other administrative tasks, will be transferred from the Office of the Capital Master Plan to the Office of Central Support Services. The Office of Central Support Services will be provided with construction documents and, in some cases, already contracted work, and will be responsible for managing the execution of the remaining scope. The cost of these post-renovation activities will be met from within the existing approved resources of the capital master plan project.

25. The post-renovation transition period up to 30 June 2015 will allow the external consultant team and project team staff of the capital master plan to be closed out efficiently and the residual management and administration will be assumed by the Office of Central Support Services. The expertise (and fees) of the construction manager, Skanska, and the programme manager, Gardiner & Theobald, will not be required for the post-renovation construction activities, which are comparatively small in scale and have a far less complex scope. For similar reasons, the remaining scope does not warrant extension of the whole capital master plan project team in parallel with the expertise of the in-house project management staff of the Office of Central Support Services. However, the expertise of the capital master plan team will be retained to augment staff in the Office of Central Support Services, where possible. This transfer of skills and experience would bring valuable cumulative knowledge to the benefit of the Administration.

26. The remaining post-renovation tasks will be contracted by the Office of the Capital Master Plan and completed by the Office of Central Support Services. They are listed below:

(a) Demolition of the temporary North Lawn Building. This task will include the relocation of the limited remaining functions, including offices for staff of the Department of Safety and Security, classrooms and teacher offices, touchdown space and other offices, and the removal of the building. This task will be completed by late 2015;

(b) Site landscape work, including relocation of the exterior artwork and gifts. The preparatory work for this activity will be completed by the Office of the Capital Master Plan and the work itself will be initiated by the Office of the Capital Master Plan, but it can only be completed following the completion of task (a) above;

(c) Security-related work at 42nd and 48th Streets, including reconfiguration of the north and south entrances of the Service Drive to accommodate a loading dock at 48th Street, and revised traffic patterns at 42nd Street. The work can only commence after the issuance of necessary permits by the host city. It will require up to 18 months of construction time and is scheduled to conclude in late 2016. This will be the conclusion of the capital master plan project.

27. A significant responsibility of the Office of the Capital Master Plan prior to its closure in June 2015 will be to ensure the accountable and prompt handling of records pertaining to the last phases of the project, as well as the financial close-out, final payments and reconciliation of accounts with all capital master plan-related contractors. In addition, prior to its closure, the Office of the Capital Master Plan will provide information and support to relevant offices of the Department of Management and the Office of Legal Affairs, as may be required in order to enable the Organization to resolve any outstanding claims or disputes with contractors.

28. Financial statements regarding the project activities and expenditure for the biennium 2014-2015 will be completed, consolidated and finalized in March 2016 by the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, following established financial reporting processes, in compliance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

29. The remaining requirements until completion of the renovation phase include staff costs and operating expenses until 30 June 2015, taking into account the downsizing plan developed by the Office of the Capital Master Plan in consultation with the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management.

30. Succession planning entails retaining expertise of the capital master plan staff by the Administration. The project staff built technical and substantive expertise which is a valuable asset to the Organization and therefore efforts are being made to retain expertise and to use technical skills in full compliance with the established procedures for the recruitment of United Nations staff.

31. The established accountability mechanisms pertaining to the reporting of the Office of Central Support Services to the Under-Secretary-General for Management will determine the remaining post-renovation construction activities and administrative tasks required after the closure of the Office of the Capital Master Plan.

32. With regard to the resources for the remaining post-renovation activities required after closure of the Office of the Capital Master Plan, appropriate arrangements for project management and support costs will be established between the Office of the Capital Master Plan and the Office of Central Support Services.

VI. Benchmarking of the capital master plan project against other large projects

33. Few projects are as complex as the capital master plan, which has entailed the entire renovation and restoration of celebrated, historic buildings, while maintaining a high level of security and operational continuity within the United Nations Headquarters compound at all times for the activities of the Member States. With an expected cost of the capital master plan project, when completed in 2014, which is 11.3 per cent over the budget approved by the General Assembly in 2006, the capital master plan has distinguished itself at the highest level as compared to almost any other multi-year project of this financial scale.

34. According to an article published in the April/May 2014 edition of the *Project Management Journal* regarding infrastructure projects costing \$1 billion or more, 9 of 10 such projects have cost overruns. Overruns of up to 50 per cent in real terms are common; those over 50 per cent are not uncommon.¹ Of a sample of 258 megaprojects in 20 countries, the actual construction cost was on average 28 per cent higher than estimated at the time the project was approved.²

35. In terms of schedule, in view of the additional year required by the enhanced security upgrades, which pertain to the change in blast requirements by the host country, the capital master plan renovation is concluding on the schedule presented seven years ago plus one year for the enhanced security upgrades.

VII. Accountability

A. Governance

36. The capital master plan project is managed by the Office of the Capital Master Plan, with strategic guidance provided by the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management. The Under-Secretary-General for Management is responsible for the successful delivery of the capital master plan and has maintained a proactive role in monitoring and supervising the progress of the plan to ensure that the remaining portions of the project are delivered on schedule and that project costs are well controlled and any risks are managed and mitigated.

37. The Executive Director of the capital master plan, who, at the Assistant Secretary-General level, reports to the Under-Secretary-General for Management, is entrusted with and accountable for the day to day management of the project, updating the Under-Secretary-General on a weekly basis on the status of the project and providing regular updates to the Management Committee.

38. Project monitoring and oversight meetings include weekly and monthly Directors' meetings attended by representatives of the Office of Central Support Services, the Department of Safety and Security, and the Office of Information and Communications Technology; weekly construction meetings and project schedule reviews; joint weekly coordination meetings with the construction management and

¹ Available at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pmj.21409/full>.

² Available at <http://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/1304/1304.4476.pdf>.

programme management firms; and weekly coordination meetings with the Procurement Division.

39. The Office of the Capital Master Plan established a focal point system whereby a single staff member is identified in each department and office to serve as the point of contact for project coordination matters. In addition to that system, the Under-Secretary-General for Management and the Executive Director of the capital master plan have established close consultative relationships with senior officials in other departments, especially those that provide support to or are considered special clients of the project, such as the Department of Safety and Security, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, and the Department of Public Information, with which regular meetings are held to coordinate planning and user requirements.

40. Periodic meetings with the host city and the United States Mission to the United Nations related to security, safety and access for host city first responders facilitate the exchange of views and resolution of issues under the authority of the host city and host country.

41. In compliance with the request made by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General continued to periodically update the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions through regular information briefings in addition to annual progress reporting on all aspects of the implementation of the capital master plan project, including the financial status, progress on activities and risk mitigation measures.

42. The project is currently being managed with clear lines of accountability and with robust internal and external oversight.

43. Within the established reporting structure of the Secretariat, the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts continues to review the annual progress reports of the Secretary-General on the capital master plan before they are submitted to the General Assembly.

B. Oversight and audits

44. In addition to the governance arrangements described above, the Board of Auditors and the Office of Internal Oversight Services have continued their audits of the project.

45. The Board of Auditors audited the capital master plan project from March to May 2014. In its annual report on the audit of the capital master plan for the 12-month period ended 31 December 2013 (A/69/5 (Vol. V)), the Board acknowledged that there has been significant progress on the plan and noted that costs have largely been contained since it last reported in 2013, reflecting the highly skilled and agile approach of the Office of the Capital Master Plan in the face of demanding deadlines. The Board also emphasized that greater certainty is now needed on how the project will be completed to deliver maximum benefits to the United Nations.

46. The cost structure analysed by the Board included the capital master plan project costs, the enhanced security upgrades project scope, the donations scope, the associated costs and the secondary data centre costs. Hence, the Board reported that

the anticipated consolidated final cost of the capital master plan is largely unchanged at \$2,374 million.

47. The Board recognized that the consolidated cost overrun of \$379 million related to issues and events that occurred earlier in the project and no new risks or significant cost increases occurred during the period under review. In this regard, it is reiterated that the Secretary-General proposed that the cost of associated activities and the cost of the secondary data centre be funded from the regular budget. Hence, \$154.8 million of the Board's identified cost overrun actually reflects a revision to the proposed source of funding without a commensurate increase in resources for the capital master plan project. As to the renovation activities, the Board stated that cost overruns are common in major construction projects, in particular in a project of the size and complexity of the capital master plan.

48. The Office of Internal Oversight Services is in the process of auditing major contracts between the United Nations and the Construction Manager and will be issuing its report on the audit of the contracts for construction of the Secretariat Building. In response to audit recommendations regarding the General Assembly Building, the Office of the Capital Master Plan is seeking opportunities to mitigate the costs of acceleration and is addressing non-conformance reports to ensure effective quality control.

49. Positive actions have been taken by the Administration in response to the recommendations of the Board and the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the implementation of which is described in section XII below.

C. Advisory Board of the Capital Master Plan

50. As directed by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/292, an Advisory Board was established by the Secretary-General in December 2009. The Board at present consists of representatives of Brazil (Jayme Zettel), India (K. T. Ravindran), Kenya (Susan Kibue), Switzerland (Anna Torriani) and the United States of America (Kent Barwick). It has met nine times, including once since the publication of the eleventh annual progress report. At the ninth meeting, held on 2 October 2013, the members of the Board were briefed on the project and had an opportunity to observe and discuss the construction in progress. The Board received a complete update on the status of the project, as well as detailed briefings and presentations on all aspects of the project that were recently completed or pending.

VIII. Donations programme of the capital master plan and solicitation of voluntary contributions

51. As previously reported to the General Assembly in prior annual progress reports, the Secretariat collaborated with a number of permanent missions that expressed interest in providing additional voluntary contributions to the capital master plan in order to be identified as the donor of a specific room or space at Headquarters. The establishment of the donations programme for the capital master plan was in accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly in its resolutions 63/270 and 64/228.

52. Since the date of publication of the eleventh annual progress report, the Secretariat cooperated with several Member States regarding their participation in the donations programme with regard to spaces in the General Assembly Building, including for the Café Austria (Austria), the new lounge on the second floor to the south of the Plenary Hall (China), the provision of new furniture for a sitting area on the second balcony (Bangladesh) and the addition of a design element to an existing donation on the first floor adjacent to the delegates' entrance (New Zealand). In addition to the aforementioned new donations, the Secretariat is cooperating with two Member States (Finland and Thailand) to renew past donations of lounge furniture which will be placed in the General Assembly Building. The Secretary-General is grateful to all Member States that participated in the donations programme.

53. In section VII, paragraph 17, of its resolution 68/247 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to make every effort to solicit additional voluntary contributions to help finance the budget shortfall. In response to this request, the Secretariat sent a note verbale dated 28 April 2014 to all permanent missions to the United Nations stating that additional financial contributions would be greatly appreciated to provide assistance for the successful completion of the historic project to modernize the Headquarters. The note verbale invited permanent missions to contact the Office of the Capital Master Plan for further information. Discussions are ongoing.

54. As at 30 June 2014, the donations received from Member States amounted to \$113.9 million. In addition, in-kind contributions received from Member States were evaluated at \$2.5 million.

IX. Artwork and gifts

55. In section IV, paragraph 14, of its resolution 68/247 A, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the current conditions of maintenance of the art, crafts and gifts donated to the United Nations in New York in the context of his next progress report.

56. The renovation of the General Assembly Building required the removal of artworks that had been donated to the Organization over the years, primarily by Member States. A significant number of indoor gifts were relocated to the temporary North Lawn Building during the renovation period. In some cases, the original donor Member State agreed to retrieve the gifts for the purpose of restoration or cleaning.

57. Owing to many factors, including physical changes to some of the rooms as well as new donations, some art could not be returned to its original location. As encouraged by the General Assembly in section V, paragraph 22, of its resolution 67/246, the Secretary-General sought and took into account the views of the donating parties on all available options prior to such changes, in cases where a change of location of a gift was required. Following the consultations, an art placement plan and schedule was developed by the Department of Management.

58. The Secretary-General is extremely appreciative of the efforts undertaken by those permanent missions that retrieved gifts for conservation, cleaning and storage during the course of the capital master plan.

X. Accessibility

59. Improvement to accessibility has been a core goal of the capital master plan since the initiation of the project and the renovations undertaken by the project have brought the entire United Nations Headquarters compound into compliance with modern building and fire safety codes.

60. In the General Assembly Hall, the height of each table on the entire main floor has been raised to accommodate wheelchairs, and the lighting and signs at the names have been lowered, so that faces will still be visible on camera. Accessible positions in every type of seating (adviser, delegate or observer) have been made at each floor level.

61. Conference Rooms 5, 6 and 7 have been provided with accessible positions and several tables will be raised to have proper clearance. All of the tables in Conference Room 7 will be fully accessible for wheelchairs. Accessible positions have been added in Conference Room 8.

62. New Conference Rooms 11 and 12 will be more flexible than other rooms. In the typical configuration, there will be accessible positions at each type of seating. The interpretation booths will be entered directly from the floor level.

63. The aisles and tables in Conference Room 4 on the main floor are fully accessible. All of the advisers' seats are removable.

64. All toilet rooms are accessible and in the General Assembly Building the project will add many individual unisex-accessible bathrooms.

65. In addition to the major improvements to accessibility described above, the following actions have been or will be carried out:

(a) Swing doors and accessible turnstiles and magnetometers have been provided at access control points;

(b) Power-assisted doors have been provided at all of the major entrances to the buildings, including at the delegates' entrance and public entrance;

(c) The new visitors' entrance between 45th and 46th Streets will be more gracious than the former entry and will feature an integrated ramp;

(d) Accessible seating locations and ramps will be provided for all speakers' platforms;

(e) Signage will be provided with Braille graphics and the correct contrast and letter sizes;

(f) Door widths and clear areas required on the pull and push sides will meet accessibility standards;

(g) Life safety systems will include speakers and strobes;

(h) Accessible parking spaces, located close to fully accessible routes into the buildings, will be provided in the required quantities;

(i) Audio frequency induction loop technology has been installed in the renovated Conference Building and the General Assembly Building. This technology is used to improve the speech intelligibility of hearing-aid users by eliminating background noise. In addition, a wide variety of headsets will be

provided to suit a variety of cultural and personal preferences of meeting participants. Enhanced support for T-switch-equipped assisted listening devices will be implemented to the extent technically feasible.

XI. Summary of options pertaining to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building for consideration by the General Assembly

66. As described in the eighth annual progress report on the capital master plan (A/65/511), accelerated strategy IV included the renovation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building. However, in the light of studies undertaken to evaluate the resilience of the buildings to threats from adjacent roadways,³ it was determined that neither building, within reasonable costs, could be successfully renovated to achieve safe occupancy. This is attributable to the structure of the buildings themselves, which are relatively lightweight, and their proximity to the FDR Drive off-ramp.

67. It was concluded that the existing buildings could not be made structurally safe at any cost. It was further concluded that the small footprint of the buildings and the proximity to the FDR Drive off-ramp offered a highly inefficient site for a replacement building. Such a building would need to have very thick walls and oversized structure, providing only a very inefficient, extremely expensive result and having significant cost implications.

68. As a result, as previously reported to the General Assembly in the ninth, tenth and eleventh annual progress reports (respectively, A/66/527, A/67/350 and A/68/352) the design of the renovation of the two buildings has been suspended.

69. The General Assembly, in section VII, paragraph 8, of its resolution 68/247 B, recalled paragraphs 7 and 12 of section IV of its resolution 68/247 A and requested the Secretary-General to report thereon in the context of the twelfth annual progress report.

70. In section IV, paragraphs 7 and 12, of its resolution 68/247 A, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at the first part of the resumed sixty-eighth session the information specified in paragraph 50 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/68/551), in which the Advisory Committee expressed the view that the Secretary-General should be requested to submit feasible alternative options for the locations of the functions currently housed in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building that are independent of the long-term Headquarters accommodation requirement, thus allowing for a final completion of the capital master plan project.

71. In section IV, paragraph 12, of its resolution 68/247 A, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to interact with the host city with a view to determining available options for resolving the pending security concerns in relation to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building, to assist the Assembly in making a final determination on the issue within the context of the capital master plan and to report thereon at the first part of the resumed sixty-eighth session of the Assembly.

³ As explained in A/65/511, para. 78.

72. On 25 February 2014, a letter from a representative of the host country was received in reply to the letter from the Secretariat dated 5 February 2014 which requested that the host city take action to protect United Nations Headquarters by closing the off-ramp at 42nd Street to all but authorized vehicles. The response from the host country stated that it is not feasible either to close the off-ramp or to relocate it to another location. The letter further stated that given the physical characteristics of the two buildings, the host country acknowledged that there was no ability to make the two buildings secure.

73. However, it remains the intention of the Secretariat to continue to make every effort to reach an understanding on measures with the host country and the host city, with a view to mitigating security concerns along 42nd Street. No progress has been made on this matter at the time of submission of the present report. The remainder of section XI therefore provides a summary of the options heretofore provided to the General Assembly for its consideration, in response to its prior requests.

74. For the long-term, the functions of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building were incorporated in all options for long-term office accommodations in New York (see A/68/734, para. 21), including:

- (a) A DC-5 building;
- (b) A new building on the North Lawn;
- (c) Continuation of rental space.

75. As an interim measure, the options included:

(a) The functions could remain in place (if the security situation changes) (A/67/720, para. 76);

(b) The functions could be provided in the temporary North Lawn Building (if the General Assembly decided to delay the demolition of the building) (A/68/352, para. 71, medium-term option A);

(c) The functions could be relocated to newly leased off-site rental space (with the exception of the cafeteria, which would occupy space in the third basement) (A/68/352, para. 72, medium-term option B);

(d) The functions could be relocated to other buildings on-site (assuming that the North Lawn Building would have been demolished) (A/68/352, para. 73, medium-term option C). Specifically, the cafeteria functions could be relocated to spaces in the Conference Building and the Secretariat Building; the interpreters' space and classrooms could be relocated to the third basement; the library and library-related office functions could be relocated to the second basement (this would require relocation of the engineering shops);

(e) Alternatively, the library functions could be relocated to the lower floors of the Secretariat Building, requiring relocation of the present functions.

76. As expressed in paragraph 75 of the eleventh annual progress report, the Secretary-General remains of the view that, pending resolution of the security situation, the interests of the Organization would be best served through the incorporation of the library and cafeteria programmes into the future decision of the General Assembly regarding long-term accommodation at Headquarters.

77. Taking into account the need to mitigate security and safety concerns, it is the intention of the Secretary-General to seek interim measures for the relocation of functions in the most cost-efficient manner that would preserve the minimal functionality in order to safeguard and protect the Organization's staff and ensure continuity of functions in the two buildings, which are essential for the proper administration of the United Nations Headquarters compound.

XII. Implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and the Office of Internal Oversight Services

A. Recommendations of the Board of Auditors

78. In its report on the audit of the capital master plan for the period ended 31 December 2013, the Board of Auditors noted that of 21 recommendations for the periods ended 31 December 2011 and 31 December 2012, 7 (33 per cent) were fully implemented, 5 (24 per cent) are under implementation and 9 (43 per cent) were closed by the Board.

79. Developments in the areas of flexible working strategies, risk-based approach to determining, allocating and reporting contingency funds, and progress towards review of ongoing maintenance contracts have been recognized by the Board.

80. The Board concluded that at the time of its report, taking into account work remaining and known risks, the Administration is on track to hold the September 2014 general debate in the refurbished General Assembly Building, although some work will be deferred until a later date.

81. The Board's recommendations for the period ended 31 December 2013 were focused on four areas, as set out below:

(a) Clarify to the General Assembly during the main part of its sixty-ninth session which elements of the scope of the project will not be delivered as part of the capital master plan and define plans for delivery and any budgetary implications. Elements of the capital master plan are currently scheduled for delivery after the Office of the Capital Master Plan closes;

(b) Apply independent project assurance to all major projects. There is currently no established approach to providing independent project assurance in the United Nations;

(c) Commit to visible senior management leadership on the flexible workspace project. Experience suggests that like all change initiatives that have an impact on the day to day working environment, senior management leading by example will be vital in gaining staff buy-in and to securing the intended benefits;

(d) Review maintenance arrangements based on the operating data of new assets currently being collected and assess possibilities for obtaining better value for money for the Administration's requirements.

82. Sections V and VI of the present report respond to the Board's recommendation in paragraph 81 (a) above.

83. As to the recommendation in paragraph 81 (b) above on cost controls and an independent assurance mechanism, the Administration is of the view that adequate

controls were put in place for the capital master plan. More details are provided in the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors contained in its reports on the United Nations for the biennium ended 31 December 2013 and on the capital master plan for the year ended 31 December 2013.

84. The Board also recommended that the Administration should establish a more effective and regular governance mechanism. The Administration responded that the governance established for the capital master plan project includes oversight by the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management, and various mechanisms for reporting to the Administration's senior executive leadership, including the Senior Management Group chaired by the Secretary-General, the Management Committee, the Department of Management's Executive Management Group and the Advisory Board of the Capital Master Plan. Regular progress reports are provided to senior management by the Assistant Secretary-General, Executive Director of the capital master plan. The Administration considers that this is an appropriate governance structure for the project.

85. The Administration has also agreed with the Board that every major project in the Secretariat needs an independent project assurance function for cost control and for ensuring the most efficient project implementation. However, as demonstrated by the capital master plan, the independent assurance function needs to be adapted to the specific nature of the project that is being implemented. Retaining the services of a specialized external company to carry out this function and forming a project steering committee are considered viable project assurance options among the universe of options that can be considered.

86. With regard to the recommendation in paragraph 81 (c) above, the Administration responded that the involvement of senior managers in the flexible workplace programme would be one of the matters discussed at the flexible workplace steering committee and that the Office of Central Support Services was in the process of convening the steering committee.

87. Regarding the recommendation in paragraph 81 (d) above, the Administration responded that the Office of Central Support Services has developed a comprehensive maintenance strategy for all mechanical electrical and plumbing systems, including whether maintenance would be delivered through in-house staff, existing service contracts or capital master plan maintenance packages. A detailed plan has also been developed in coordination with the Procurement Division of future solicitation processes as the last elements of the capital master plan are handed over. Maintenance personnel have received additional training and the capital master plan engineer of record has developed preventive maintenance plans and procedures for all new capital master plan systems. The Office of Central Support Services has also begun to collect more comprehensive operating data and, based on the final system configuration that the capital master plan is delivering, the Office is developing specifications for a software tool to measure energy consumption.

88. In its earlier report for the period ended 31 December 2012 the Board recommended formally documenting and embedding lessons learned for other emerging projects. In this regard, the Office of Central Support Services has documented lessons learned and has overall responsibility for capturing and disseminating lessons learned from major construction and renovation projects. In

coordination with the Office of Central Support Services, the Office of the Capital Master Plan had opportunities to share its experience and best practices with the Administration in Geneva in the context of the strategic heritage plan. The Office of Central Support Services will ensure that all construction and renovation projects will be briefed on the lessons learned from large capital projects, including the capital master plan in the context of the Board recommendations for the periods ended 31 December 2012 and 31 December 2013, regarding the quantification of risks and the establishment and utilization of contingency reserves. The Administration has accepted those recommendations and intends to implement the risk assessment methodology for all future construction and renovations projects.

B. Recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

89. The last audit by the Office of Internal Oversight Services of guaranteed maximum price contracts for the period ended 31 December 2013 focused on lessons learned and it issued one recommendation: the Department of Management should develop a lessons learned register for use on future construction projects that captures the institutional knowledge and good practices learned from the experience with the capital master plan project. The Office recommended that the register be developed before the completion of the capital master plan with input from the Office of the Capital Master Plan, the Office of Central Support Services, the Department of Safety and Security, the Office of Legal Affairs and other stakeholders.

90. In compliance with the recommendation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Office of the Capital Master Plan presented the majority of the lessons learned in the eleventh annual progress report and it continues to share its experience and lessons learned through the handover process with the Office of Central Support Services and with the Administration in Geneva in the context of the strategic heritage plan.

XIII. Financial status of the capital master plan project

A. Status of assessments and sources of funding for the capital master plan

91. In section VII, paragraph 9, of its resolution 68/247 B, the General Assembly reaffirmed the scope of the capital master plan project (in accordance with paragraph 10 of its resolution 61/251) and in paragraph 10 the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take fully into account the provisions of paragraph 6 of section IV of its resolution 68/247 A in the context of the twelfth annual progress report. Paragraph 6 provides that "nothing in the present resolution shall be interpreted as a change in the current scope of the capital master plan as decided by the General Assembly, nor should the need for liquidity of the project be linked to the completion of the renovation of the buildings under the current scope".

92. In accordance with the decisions taken by the General Assembly in resolution 68/247 A and reaffirmed in resolution 68/247 B, the renovation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and South Annex Building remains in the scope of the capital master plan project, which is unchanged. However, as stated in paragraph 68

above, the design of the renovation of the two buildings remains suspended owing to security concerns.

93. The scope of the capital master plan project comprises (a) the original renovation work approved by the General Assembly, (b) the enhanced security upgrades project, which is fully funded by the host country, and (c) additional scope requested under the capital master plan donations programme, which is also fully funded.

94. As at 30 June 2014, the expected project cost to complete the scope of the capital master plan project was \$2,214.97 million.

95. However, the total approved funding for the capital master plan project amounts to \$2,150.0 million, comprising (a) appropriations for the original project scope of \$1,876.7 million, (b) donations of \$13.9 million, (c) interest income and the capital master plan working capital reserve amounting to \$159.4 million, and (d) funding for the enhanced security upgrades of \$100.0 million. All funding available in the amount of \$2,150.0 million has been applied and continues to be applied to ongoing active renovation activities so as to meet contractual obligations as they fall due for payment.

96. Table 3 below compares the total approved funding for the capital master plan project to the expected cost to complete the project. A remaining portion of the project, with a budget of \$65.0 million, remains unfunded.

Table 3
Comparison of the funding for the capital master plan project and
the expected cost to completion, as at 30 June 2014
(Millions of United States dollars)

<i>Description</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>References</i>
Total appropriations from 2004 to 2011	1 876.7	Resolutions 57/292, 59/295, 60/248, 60/256, 60/282, 61/251, 62/87 and 64/228
Voluntary contributions	13.9	Received under the capital master plan donations programme
Use of interest income (through 2015) and the capital master plan working capital reserve	159.4	Resolutions 66/258, 67/246 and 68/247 A
Funding for the enhanced security upgrades	100.0	Contribution by the host country
Total funding available	2 150.0	
Project cost of original renovation and scope requested under the donations programme	2 115.0	
Cost of enhanced security upgrades	100.0	
Total project cost to completion	2 215.0	
Remaining portion of the project	65.0	

97. As at 30 June 2014, an amount of \$0.7 million in assessments remained unpaid to the capital master plan for 2011 and prior periods. Voluntary contributions have been paid in full.

B. Interest income, working capital reserve and cash balance

98. The amount of interest to be accrued on the balance of capital master plan funds by 31 December 2014 is expected to be \$113.7 million. As at 30 June 2014, the working capital reserve remained at \$45.0 million. A residual balance of \$1,350 remained unpaid to the working capital reserve. The cash balance as at 30 June 2014 was \$150.0 million. The cash flow projection for the remaining project construction, close-out and post-renovation activities, which are described in paragraph 26 above, is provided in annex I to the present report.

C. Solicitation of voluntary contributions

99. In section VI, paragraph 17, of its resolution 68/247 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to make every effort to solicit additional voluntary contributions to help finance the budget shortfall. In response to this request the Office of the Capital Master Plan continued to solicit voluntary contributions and is in the process of coordination with regard to additional contributions with prospective donors.

D. Capital master plan project expenditure and requirements for the remaining project period

100. The estimated cost to complete the capital master plan project is \$2,215.0 million. The project requirements for the active construction works amount to \$2,150.0 million, excluding the original estimated costs for suspended construction of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building. As at 30 June 2014, cumulative expenditure incurred amounted to \$2,131.8 million, which means that 99.2 per cent of the estimated cost to completion has been expended and committed.

101. The latest status of the capital master plan expenditure and remaining requirements is summarized in table 4 below.

Table 4
Capital master plan project expenditure and requirements until completion, as at 30 June 2014

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Description	Expenditure	Remaining requirements		Total
	From project inception to June 2014	July-December 2014	January-June 2015	
Capital master plan project				
Design contractual services	167 372.0	3 000.0	–	170 372.0
Staff costs for the Office of the Capital Master Plan	29 751.9	1 560.6	1 127.6	32 440.1
Support staff costs ^a	13 929.3	699.7	365.9	14 994.9
Operating and other costs	12 206.9	635.9	715.5	13 558.3
Programme management and other consultants	51 698.0	–	–	51 698.0
Construction and pre-construction	1 346 500.3	34 566.5	13 000.0	1 394 066.8
Swing space costs (including rent)	554 600.8	–	–	554 600.8
Subtotal	2 176 059.2	40 462.7	15 209.0	2 231 730.9
Prior-period adjustments	9 204.0	–	–	9 204.0
Adjusted project expenditure	2 185 263.2	40 462.7	15 209.0	2 240 934.9
Savings on prior-period obligations	(151 161.9)	(39 800.0)	–	(190 961.9)
Total, capital master plan project expenditure	2 034 101.3	662.7	15 209.0	2 049 973.0
Enhanced security upgrades project	97 650.7	2 349.3	–	100 000.0
Subtotal	2 131 752.0	3 012.0	15 209.0	2 149 973.0
Budget for suspended construction work				65 000.0
Total				2 214 973.0

^a Secretariat staff from the Department of Safety and Security, the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of Central Support Services (Procurement Division), the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts (Accounts Division) assigned to the capital master plan.

102. Table 4 above illustrates that the requirements for the project from July to December 2014 are estimated at \$3.0 million and the requirements for the six-month period from 1 January to 30 June 2015 are estimated at \$15.2 million.

103. Regarding the estimated remaining requirements for 2015, these amounts relate to the post-renovation tasks as described in paragraph 26 above as well as closure and final reconciliation of all remaining contracts, which will be completed approximately six months following the completion of construction activities. In preparation for the final closure of the project, the Office of the Capital Master Plan is actively closing contracts for all project activities that have been completed.

E. Estimated cost to complete the capital master plan project, as at 30 June 2014

104. Table 5 below presents the most current and up-to-date project cost estimates. Following the review undertaken by the Secretariat, as at 30 June 2014, the cost to complete the capital master plan project (inclusive of work funded by donations from Member States) is estimated at \$2,214.97 million.

Table 5

Estimated project cost to complete the capital master plan

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>As at December 2013</i>	<i>As at June 2014</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Construction	1 087 578	1 089 417	1 839
Use of construction contingency	138 981	146 702	7 721
Professional fees and management costs	368 874	368 874	—
Contingency and escalation	7 721	—	(7 721)
Subtotal, construction	1 603 154	1 604 993	1 839
Swing space	267 614	265 775	(1 839)
Leases from 1 October 2012	25 000	25 000	—
Use of office swing space contingency	24 648	24 648	—
Library swing space	2 714	2 714	—
Conference swing space	150 475	150 475	—
Use of conference swing space contingency	41 368	41 368	—
Subtotal, swing space	511 819	509 980	(1 839)
Enhanced security upgrades	100 000	100 000	—
Total, project cost, including the enhanced security upgrades	2 214 973	2 214 973	—
Funding			
Project budget and donations	1 890 612	1 890 612	—
Application of the interest income and the working capital reserve	159 400	159 400	—
Enhanced security upgrade subproject funded by the host country	100 000	100 000	—
	2 150 012	2 150 012	
<i>Difference between the project costs and funding</i>	<i>64 961</i>	<i>64 961</i>	<i>—</i>

105. In order to avoid claims at the final stage of the project, the Office of the Capital Master Plan maintains dialogue with the construction manager, who regularly updates the capital master plan project management team on any information pertaining to disputes and claims. Given industry experience, some claims may not be resolved in negotiations and, accordingly, some provision will be maintained for potential settlement.

106. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building cannot be renovated as originally planned for security reasons. Their use and the long-term placement of the current functions need to be considered in the context of the options discussed in section XI of the present report. Depending on what decision is taken, the solution for the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building could vary significantly.

107. The estimated project cost to complete the capital master plan includes the \$65.0 million original budget for the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building. However, there is currently no request for commitment authority. Any work to fulfil the mandate of the General Assembly with regard to these buildings will entail an additional appropriation and assessment upon Member States. The amount of the appropriation will depend upon the nature and scope of work.

XIV. Consolidated expenditure and requirements

108. Total consolidated expenditure to 30 June 2014, which comprises the capital master plan project costs as discussed in section XIII above, together with the associated costs and the cost of the secondary data centre, amounts to \$2,286.4 million.

109. The final consolidated requirements amount to \$2,369.8 million.

110. The revised overall associated cost expenditure amounts to \$139.8 million.

111. The cost of the secondary data centre is \$19.5 million, which, after savings on prior-period obligations of \$0.3 million are deducted, gives rise to a final cost of \$19.2 million. The support account for peacekeeping operations contributed an amount of \$4.2 million to the cost of the secondary data centre. Consequently, the net cost borne by the capital master plan is \$15.0 million, the analysis of which is presented in annex II to the present report.

112. As shown in table 6 below, the consolidated requirements for the 12 months to 30 June 2015 amount to \$18.4 million. Of that amount, \$18.2 million relates to the capital master plan project scope (including the enhanced security upgrades). Associated costs requirements for the same period amount to \$219,100, as discussed in section XV below.

Table 6
Consolidated expenditure and requirements until project completion, as at 30 June 2014

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Description	Expenditure from project inception to June 2014	Remaining requirements		Total
		July to December 2014	January to June 2015	
Capital master plan project (excluding security scope)	2 034 101	663	15 209	2 049 973
Enhanced security upgrades	97 651	2 349	—	100 000
Associated costs	139 593	154	65	139 812

<i>Description</i>	<i>Expenditure from project inception to June 2014</i>	<i>Remaining requirements</i>		<i>Total</i>
		<i>July to December 2014</i>	<i>January to June 2015</i>	
Secondary data centre	15 040	–	–	15 040
Subtotal	2 286 385	3 166	15 274	2 304 825
Remaining portion of the project				65 000
Consolidated total				2 369 825

XV. Associated costs expenditure and requirements

113. In his report updating final associated costs expenditure (A/68/352/Add.3), the Secretary-General presented the estimated expenditure for activities associated with the capital master plan ("associated costs") in the total amount of \$140,253,300. That estimate has since been revised downwards to \$139,812,000.

114. As previously reported, all departments and offices have ceased associated costs activities, with the exception of the Office of Central Support Services, which, because of delays in the project schedule owing largely to storm Sandy, is undertaking handover activities during 2014 through March 2015. This is later than previously reported because of delays in on-boarding the staff. The cost of the handover support remains at \$179,500 for one general temporary assistance position at the P-4 level for nine months, from July 2014 to March 2015. The Administration considers that it is important to complete these transition activities.

115. It will be recalled that at the time of issuance of the aforementioned report containing updated information on associated costs, the financial period-end closing of accounts was still under way and it was reported that since a number of general temporary assistance positions in the Department of Safety and Security were being terminated, the unutilized balance of approved resources in the amount of \$314,000 was being retained until the financial records were completed. No expenditure was recorded for 2013; however, a final residual payment of \$39,600 had been made and was held in abeyance in a payroll clearing account at the end of 2013. Consequently, of the \$314,000 temporarily retained for 2013, an amount of \$274,400 was eventually released and the expenditure of \$39,600 was booked to 2014.

116. Previously, the Secretary-General reported cancelled (liquidated) obligations from prior periods of \$3,097,800. Such obligations represent commitments that were entered into with third-party contractors in previous years, which have subsequently been released or reduced with no disbursement arising on the part of the Organization in cases where actual cost of works completed were lower than values applied at the contract award stage. Prior-period savings have increased slightly to \$3,265,200.

117. Final expenditure for associated costs, as currently recorded, is presented in table 7 below, analysed by year and by department and office.

Table 7

Summary of associated cost requirements, by department and office

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Department/office	Actual expenditure 2008-2011	Actual expenditure 2012	Actual expenditure 2013	Expenditure as at 30 June 2014	Projected expenditure July-December 2014	Projected expenditure 2015	Total 2008-2015
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(e) - (a) - (b) - (d) + (e) + (f) + (g)
Department for General Assembly and Conference Management	2 272.9	638.2	—	—	—	—	2 911.1
Department of Public Information	25 772.0	287.1	(2.0)	—	—	—	26 057.1
Office of Central Support Services	21 108.6	3 746.4	3 370.4	—	114.1 ^a	65.4 ^a	28 404.9
Office of the Capital Master Plan	18 146.2	7 784.6	24 064.6	—	—	—	49 995.4
Office of Information and Communications Technology	2 035.5	626.8	4.6	—	—	—	2 666.9
Construction (Office of Information and Communications Technology)	5 446.9	81.4	665.3	—	—	—	6 193.6
Department of Safety and Security	18 726.9	5 785.8	2 295.9	—	39.6 ^b	—	26 848.2
Total	93 509.0	18 950.3	30 398.8	—	153.7	65.4	143 077.2
Less prior-period obligations released	(3 264.8)	—	—	(0.4)	—	—	(3 265.2)
Net total	90 244.2	18 950.3	30 398.8	(0.4)	153.7	65.4	139 812.0

^a Deferred general temporary assistance for handover activities owing to storm Sandy and delays in recruitment.^b Separation payments which, for technical reasons, were booked as expenditure in 2014 instead of 2013.

118. Annex III to the present report provides an analysis of the foregoing expenditure, after attributing the prior-period savings to the respective departments and offices. In this regard, it should be noted that the apparent excess of final expenditure in 2013 by the Office of the Capital Master Plan is actually a result of commitments released for a portion of guaranteed maximum price contracts completed in the Conference Building and recommitted for activities in the General Assembly Building that will continue until its completion. The net position is in accordance with the expenditure approved by the Assembly.

119. Table 8 below provides a summary of the approved and reported expenditure for associated costs over time.

Table 8
Chronology of associated costs requirements, 2008-2015
 (United States dollars)

<i>Period</i>	<i>General Assembly resolution</i>	<i>Amount approved by the General Assembly</i>	<i>Expenditure reported in A 68/352/Add.3</i>	<i>Expenditure actual/estimate</i>
2008-2009	63/270	30 272 400	18 373 200	18 373 200
2010	64/228	42 069 695	13 636 800	13 636 800
2011	65/269	58 871 305	61 499 000	61 499 000
2012	66/258	8 259 100	18 950 300	18 950 300
2013	67/246	3 666 100	30 891 800	30 398 800
2014-2015	68/247 B	—	—	219 100
Total		143 138 600	143 351 100	143 077 200
Less cancelled prior- period obligations				(3 265 200)
Net total				139 812 000

XVI. Actions to be taken by the General Assembly

120. The Secretary-General recommends that the General Assembly:

- (a) Note the progress made since the issuance of the update to the eleventh annual progress report;
- (b) Request the Secretary-General to continue to report on the status of the project, the schedule, the aggregate estimated cost to completion, the status of contributions, interest and the working capital reserve;
- (c) Note the intention of the Secretary-General to seek interim measures for the relocation of functions currently housed in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building in the most cost-efficient manner;
- (d) Take a decision on the relocation of the functions which take place in both buildings, taking into account the perimeter security concerns and the need for a long-term solution for these functions;
- (e) Decide on the financing of the cumulative associated costs and the cost of the secondary data centre at the main part of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Annex I

Cash flow projection for the remaining capital master plan project and the associated costs activities

(Millions of United States dollars)

<i>Description</i>	<i>Starting cash balance</i>	<i>Project and associated costs cash outflows</i>	<i>Remaining cash balance</i>
Cash balance as at 30 June 2014	150.0		150.0
By the end of October 2014		126.1	23.9
By the end of December 2014		87.4	(63.5)
By the end of March 2015		60.3	(123.8)
By the end of June 2015		20.6	(144.4)
By the end of September 2015		2.1	(146.5)
By the end of December 2015		3.1	(149.6)
By the end of March 2016		1.7	(151.3)
By the end of June 2016		1.2	(152.5)
By the end of September 2016		1.2	(153.7)
By the end of December 2016		1.1	(154.8)

Note: Cash balance as at 22 August 2014 was \$112 million.

Annex II

Secondary data centre: expenditure borne by the capital master plan fund

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Description	Expenditure				Total
	From projection inception to December 2011	January 2012-30 June 2013	Total for period ending 30 June 2013	July-December 2013	
Secondary data centre	18 584.0	941.6	19 525.6	—	19 525.6
Savings on prior-period obligations	(4.0)	(253.5)	(257.5)	—	(257.5)
					19 268.1
Expenditure attributable to the support account for peacekeeping operations	—	—	—	—	(4 227.7)
Net expenditure borne by the capital master plan	18 580.0	688.1	19 268.1	—	15 040.4

Annex III

**Summary of associated costs requirements by department
and office after allowing for prior-period savings from
cancelled obligations**

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>Expenditure net of cancelled obligations 2008-2011</i>	<i>Actual expenditure 2012</i>	<i>Actual expenditure 2013</i>	<i>Expenditure net of cancelled obligations as at 30 June 2014</i>	<i>Projected expenditure July-December 2014</i>	<i>Projected expenditure 2015</i>	<i>Total 2008-2015</i>
<i>Department office</i>	<i>(a)</i>	<i>(b)</i>	<i>(c)</i>	<i>(d)</i>	<i>(e)</i>	<i>(f)</i>	<i>(e) - (a) - (b) - (c) + (d) - (e) - (f)</i>
Department for General Assembly and Conference Management	2 272.9	638.2	—	—	—	—	2 911.1
Department of Public Information	23 968.7	287.1	(2.0)	—	—	—	24 253.8
Office of Central Support Services	20 228.5	3 746.4	3 370.4	—	114.1	65.4	27 524.8
Office of the Capital Master Plan	17 663.6	7 784.6	24 064.6	—	—	—	49 512.8
Office of Information and Communications Technology	1 984.1	626.8	4.6	—	—	—	2 615.5
Construction (Office of Information and Communications Technology)	5 438.7	81.4	665.3	—	—	—	6 185.4
Department of Safety and Security	18 687.7	5 785.8	2 295.9	(0.4)	39.6	—	26 808.6
Total	90 244.2	18 950.3	30 398.8	(0.4)	153.7	65.4	139 812.0

**General Assembly**Distr.: General
28 August 2014

Original: English

Sixty-ninth session

Item 98 (h) of the provisional agenda*

**Review and implementation of the Concluding Document
of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly****Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the
United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security
Questions in Central Africa****Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

During the reporting period, the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa held two meetings. The thirty-seventh ministerial meeting was held in N'Djamena from 19 to 23 December 2013, while the thirty-eighth meeting was held in Malabo from 29 July to 2 August 2014. The two ministerial meetings were organized by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), in its capacity as the secretariat of the Committee.

In these two statutory meetings, the Committee continued to review the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) gave a briefing on these matters, followed by an interactive discussion among Members States and the adoption of a number of recommendations, including those proposed by ECCAS, on specific actions to be taken to address the prevailing security challenges on the Committee's agenda.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and ECCAS also briefed the Committee on the latest developments relating to conventional weapons, including the adoption of Security Council resolution 2117 (2013), as well as the status of ratification of the Kinshasa Convention.

* A/69/150.



Concerned at the impact of terrorist activities and instability in the Sahel region on Central Africa, the Committee assessed progress achieved in the implementation of the Road Map for Counter-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation of Arms in Central Africa, adopted by the Committee at its thirty-third ministerial meeting, held in Bangui from 5 to 9 December 2011. In this regard, the Committee was informed of the outcomes of the series of workshops organized in the subregion with technical and financial support from UNOCA, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre.

The Committee discussed progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Summit of Heads of State and Government on Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea, which took place in Yaoundé, on 24 and 25 June 2013. The planned inauguration of the Interregional Coordination Centre and the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa in 2014 was welcomed as an important step in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea. The Committee also encouraged continued collaboration between ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States and the Gulf of Guinea Commission in the implementation of the decisions taken at the Yaoundé Summit, as well as the strong support provided by UNOCA and the United Nations Regional Office for West Africa.

The Standing Advisory Committee pursued discussions initiated during the previous two meetings on the socioeconomic impact of poaching, as well as its alleged role in the illicit financing of some rebel groups. In this regard, the Committee reviewed the efforts of Member States and partners in addressing the challenge posed by this phenomenon.

The special themes of the thirty-seventh and the thirty-eighth ministerial meetings were, respectively, "Central Africa and the terrorist threat" and "Elections in the Central Africa subregion: strengthening elections-related national capacities for the conduct of credible and peaceful electoral processes". The themes were considered particularly relevant as terrorism has become a growing threat for the subregion, while a number of countries in the subregion are preparing for elections in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

In addition, during both meetings, the Committee held particular discussions on the political, security, human rights and humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic. It also reviewed the regional humanitarian, security, and social and security repercussions of the crisis, particularly in neighbouring countries such as Cameroon, Chad, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At its thirty-seventh session, the Committee adopted the N'Djamena Appeal (see annex I), in which it called upon national stakeholders to continue political dialogue towards the organization of a national conference. It also called upon bilateral and multilateral partners to provide logistical and financial support to the Central African Republic and to the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA). At its thirty-eighth session, the Committee adopted the Malabo Appeal (see annex II), in which it urged Central African stakeholders to respect their commitments on the cessation of hostilities and violence.

The thirty-ninth ministerial meeting is scheduled to take place in Bujumbura in November 2014.

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 68/62, entitled "Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa", the General Assembly welcomed the efforts of the Committee to address cross-border security threats in Central Africa, and reaffirmed its support to the promotion of confidence-building measures at the subregional level in order to ease tensions and conflicts in Central Africa, and to further sustainable peace, stability and development in the subregion.
2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly also expressed satisfaction for the Secretary-General's support to the Committee, welcomed the role played by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), and strongly encouraged States members of the Committee and international partners to support the work of the Office. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the assistance needed by the Committee to ensure the success of its regular semi-annual meetings. It also called upon him to submit, at its sixty-ninth session, a report on the implementation of the resolution.
3. The present report is submitted in response to the above request and covers the activities carried out by the Committee from October 2013 to August 2014.

II. Activities of the Committee

4. The thirty-seventh ministerial meeting of the Committee, held from 19 to 23 December 2013 in N'Djamena, was attended by Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Rwanda.
5. The thirty-eighth ministerial meeting took place in Malabo from 29 July to 2 August 2014. The 11 States members of the Committee attended the meeting, namely Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe.
6. The following entities also participated in the ministerial meetings as observers: the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC); the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States, the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa; the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa; the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat; UNOCA; and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).
7. The main issues on the agenda of the Committee and its activities during the period under review, as facilitated by UNOCA in its capacity as the secretariat of the Committee, are set out below.

A. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

8. During the period under review, the Committee continued to provide a platform for dialogue on issues of peace and security in Central Africa and regional efforts to address them. The exchanges focused on four major priorities for preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding and regional stability: (a) political and institutional developments, to include governance issues; (b) internal and cross-border security; (c) the humanitarian and human rights situations in the region; and (d) the particular set of circumstances within each member State.

9. With respect to issues related to political and institutional developments, and the humanitarian and human rights situations, the Committee took note of the recent efforts made by member States, while noting as well that continued progress in these areas will remain an important focus for the countries of the region.

10. The Committee also highlighted existing threats to regional security and the challenges to promote regional stability. The Committee reiterated the need to address the challenges threatening the stability of the subregion, such as the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, terrorism and armed groups such as Boko Haram, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Al-Shabaab, maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea and transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking and poaching.

11. The Committee emphasized the need to build strong State institutions as well as to enhance national and subregional capacities to address threats to peace and security in Central Africa.

12. The Committee recommended the following measures as the most effective ways to address the above-mentioned issues: the ratification of the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components that can be used for their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly (Kinshasa Convention), the continued operationalization of the regional strategy on counter-terrorism and the proliferation of arms in Central Africa, the development of a regional strategy to combat drug trafficking, the establishment of national commissions on this issue and the addition of transnational organized crime as a standing agenda item of the Committee.

13. During the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth ministerial meetings, the Committee held discussions focusing on the political, security, human rights and humanitarian situations in the Central African Republic, as well as the regional impact of the crisis. The Committee welcomed the important diplomatic role played by ECCAS in efforts to find a solution to the ongoing crisis in the Central African Republic.

14. At its thirty-seventh session, the Committee adopted the N'Djamena Appeal (see annex I), in which it called upon national stakeholders in the Central African Republic to continue political dialogue towards the organization of a national conference. It also called on bilateral and multilateral partners to provide logistical and financial support to the Central African Republic and to the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA). At its thirty-eighth session, the Committee welcomed the recent agreement on cessation of hostilities concluded among armed groups operating in the Central African Republic, as an encouraging development that came about during the course of a

forum, held from 21 to 23 July 2014 in Brazzaville. The Committee adopted the Malabo Appeal (see annex II), in which it urged Central Africans to respect their commitments on the cessation of hostilities and violence.

B. Implementation of the Road Map for Counter-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation of Arms in Central Africa

15. The Committee adopted the Declaration on a road map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa at its thirty-third ministerial meeting, held in December 2011 in Bangui (see A/67/72-S/2012/159, annex, attachment I). In the Road Map, member States requested support from UNOCA and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.

16. In this regard, UNOCA, in partnership with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and, in consultation with ECCAS, initiated a process of conversion of the Road Map into a comprehensive and operational regional strategy. In this context, a workshop was organized in December 2012 in Brazzaville, where a regional network of experts on counter-terrorism was established. The workshop also helped to identify national and regional priorities as well as gaps in the development of a regional counter-terrorism strategy, including in critical areas such as project design, political support and logistic and financial assistance.

17. During the reporting period, UNOCA, in partnership with the Counter-Terrorism Centre and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, worked to support countries of the region to develop a strategy for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa through the organization of two workshops in partnership with the Governments of Gabon and Burundi, respectively. A first thematic workshop on "Police and intelligence" was held in Libreville, from 28 to 30 January 2014, which was followed by a thematic workshop on "Customs, immigration, border control and small arms and light weapons", organized in Bujumbura from 22 to 24 April 2014.

18. During the thirty-eighth ministerial meeting, the Committee was briefed on the conclusions of these workshops and was informed of the holding, before the end of the year, of additional workshops on the following themes: "Money-laundering and funding terrorism"; "Justice"; "Global strategy and conditions conducive to terrorism"; and "Civil society and human rights".

19. During the thirty-seventh ministerial meeting, the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism made a presentation on the theme "Central Africa and the terrorist threat". The Committee welcomed the proposed recommendations of the representative of the Centre, including on capacity-building for State institutions, the consolidation of peace, economic development, the empowerment of women, the fight against transnational organized crime, the ratification of treaties on arms control and non-proliferation.

20. The Committee was also informed of efforts under way by the United Nations system entities to implement the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, and recommended the development of operational synergies between the Sahel and Central African regions in the fight against terrorism.

C. Cross-border insecurity: the Lord's Resistance Army and other armed groups

21. The Committee discussed the threat and impact of the activities of LRA on Central Africa. In this regard, UNOCA provided an update on its activities to mobilize and coordinate efforts against LRA, and on its support to the African Union-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army.

22. The Committee was informed of the appointment, on 10 July 2014, of Jackson Kiprono Tuwei of Kenya as the African Union Special Envoy for the Issue of the Lord's Resistance Army, succeeding Francisco Caetano Jose Madeira. The Committee noted with appreciation the contributions of Mr. Madeira and Abou Moussa, the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, to efforts to address the challenges posed by LRA.

23. The Committee commended progress made in recent years in the fight against LRA, which has led to a significant decrease in the number of internally displaced persons and to growing defections of LRA combatants.

24. The Committee took note of the information provided by UNOCA on the convening of a meeting of stakeholders and partners working on the LRA issue in Entebbe, Uganda, in September 2014.

25. The Committee recommended that, beyond the issue of LRA, a discussion be organized on the other armed groups operating in the subregion, such as Boko Haram, the Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda and Al-Shabaab.

D. Maritime security and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

26. The Committee discussed the issue of piracy and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, which has become a growing concern for the subregion. The Committee was briefed by ECCAS on the Regional Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in Central Africa, to be based in Pointe Noire, the Congo. The Centre is expected to be inaugurated during a regional field exercise entitled "LOANGO 2014" in September 2014.

27. The Committee underlined the importance of the Regional Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in Central Africa in securing maritime domains in the Gulf of Guinea and stressed the need to strengthen interregional cooperation in order to tackle maritime insecurity. The Committee also expressed appreciation to the Congo for taking all required actions for the operationalization of the Centre and called upon all ECCAS member States to fulfil their financial obligations towards the regional maritime centre in line with the conclusions of the sixth Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa. The Committee also welcomed the proposed hosting of a ministerial meeting on maritime transport on the margins of the upcoming ECCAS Summit, to be held in N'Djamena in 2015.

28. The Committee welcomed the outcomes of the meeting of chief executives of ECOWAS, ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission, organized on 5 June 2014 in Yaoundé, at which the chief executives endorsed the founding documents of the

Interregional Coordination Centre for the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Maritime Safety and Security in Central and West Africa, scheduled to be inaugurated in September 2014 in Yaoundé. The Committee commended UNOCA, UNOWA, the International Maritime Organization and other strategic partners for their productive and active support.

E. Poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking

29. The Committee expressed concern over the security implications and socioeconomic impact of poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking, as well as possible links between these activities and the illicit financing of armed groups.

30. The Committee welcomed the organization by Gabon and Germany of a high-level meeting on poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking, on the margins of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly in September 2013. The Committee also welcomed the establishment of a "Group of Friends" to address poaching in Central Africa.

31. The Committee also welcomed the announcements by Gabon and the Congo to host a high-level summit under the auspices of the United Nations and an international conference on poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking, respectively. The Committee also called for the appointment by the Secretary-General of a special envoy or high representative on the issue of poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking.

F. Elections in Central Africa

32. During the thirty-eighth ministerial meeting, and given the fact that several States in the subregion will organize elections in 2014, 2015 and 2016, the Committee discussed the topic "Elections in the Central Africa subregion: strengthening elections-related national capacities for the conduct of credible and peaceful electoral processes".

33. The member States of the Committee were informed of possible support by the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs, ECCAS and other international and regional organizations on all aspects of the electoral process. The importance of election observation missions, including those from ECCAS, to provide additional credibility to electoral processes, was underlined.

34. The Committee requested ECCAS to work with the United Nations Development Programme, UNOCA and the African Peer Review Mechanism on proposals, to be presented at the upcoming ministerial meeting, for the establishment of practical mechanisms that could be put in place at the regional level to support the efforts of States to reform and strengthen electoral processes in Central Africa.

35. The Committee also recommended the organization of a debate on the capacity of member States to finance electoral processes without any external support and on the role of electoral observers. The Committee further recommended that member States focus in particular on the preparatory phase of elections.

G. Update on activities by the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat

36. During the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth ministerial meetings, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, on behalf of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and ECCAS briefed the Committee on the most recent developments of legal, political and regional instruments and mechanisms relating to conventional weapons. These developments focused on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the Arms Trade Treaty and Security Council resolution 2117 (2013) on small arms and light weapons. ECCAS and the Regional Centre shared with the Committee the different activities that they organized to help States fulfil and implement the Kinshasa Convention, the Arms Trade Treaty and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

37. The Regional Centre highlighted to the Committee the importance of ratifying the Kinshasa Convention. The Regional Centre also encouraged States members of the Committee which had not done so to ratify the Convention, as it could not enter into force unless six ratifications were attained. The Regional Centre also informed the Committee that it was elaborating a guide of harmonized national laws of the States parties to the Kinshasa Convention.

38. The Regional Centre reiterated the importance of accelerating the ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty and informed the member States of the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, a new financing structure to assist cooperation in arms regulation.

H. Cooperation with international and regional organizations, with the support of several United Nations entities

39. The active participation of ECCAS and the African Union, as well as the contribution of various United Nations entities, including the Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB), MINUSCA and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), to the work of the Committee, continued to provide invaluable assets to the efforts of the Committee to address peace and security challenges in Central Africa, especially through mediation and support to the authorities and civil society.

40. The Committee encouraged the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa to continue its efforts to promote human rights and democracy in Central Africa with its partners.

41. The Committee thanked UNOCA for its coordination work with the different United Nations entities present in Central Africa and expressed the wish that, in future sessions, arrangements be made to ensure the effective participation of all invited entities, including those with observer status.

42. The Committee reiterated the need for inclusive cooperation of all Central African regional organizations, including the Central African Economic and Monetary Community.

III. Administrative and financial matters

43. The Committee reviewed the financial status of the Trust Fund and expressed its deep concern over the status of contributions, deploring the lack of progress in this area, despite commitments by member States.

44. The Committee recommended better follow-up to this crucial issue, urging member States to take the necessary measures to fulfil their financial obligations vis-à-vis the Committee, in line with the spirit of the Declaration on the Trust Fund of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (Libreville Declaration), since no additional contributions had been received since December 2012.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

45. The Secretary-General welcomes the Committee's continuing efforts to consolidate peace and security in the subregion, in collaboration with subregional and regional organizations. He encourages the Committee to further strengthen its collaboration with ECCAS and to continue to build on its partnership with the United Nations system, the African Union as well as other subregional organizations and international partners.

46. The situation in the Central African Republic and the impact of this crisis on the local population and the subregion remain matters of serious concern. The adoption by the Committee of the N'Djamena and Malabo appeals in December 2013 and August 2014, respectively, are a welcome indication of the region's engagement. The Secretary-General supports the Committee's call upon Central African stakeholders to respect the Brazzaville Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities and Violence and invite Member States in the subregion to continue to support national dialogue and reconciliation in the country.

47. The Secretary-General commends Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo and Gabon for the ratification of the Kinshasa Convention, which remains an indispensable tool in the fight against the proliferation of small arms, light weapons and armed violence in Central Africa. He calls upon Member States who have not yet done so to ratify the Convention to allow its entry into force.

48. The progress made in the implementation of the Road Map for Counter-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation of Arms in Central Africa, which was adopted in December 2011 in Bangui through the holding of the Libreville and Bujumbura workshops, is heartening. The Secretary-General encourages the Committee, the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, the Counter-Terrorism Centre and UNOCA to pursue their active collaboration for a rapid operationalization of the Road Map.

49. The Committee has made progress in implementing the recommendations of the Summit of Heads of State and Government on Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea, held in Yaoundé on 24 and 25 June 2013. The Secretary-General commends the Member States of the region, ECCAS, ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission for their high level of engagement and collective efforts to address and prevent piracy and armed robbery at sea, in line with the provisions of Security Council resolution 2039 (2012). He welcomes the announced official

launching of the Interregional Coordination Centre for the Implementation of the Regional Strategy for Maritime Safety and Security in Central and West Africa, in Yaoundé in the fourth quarter of 2014. It will be a major step in the implementation of the decisions taken at the Summit of Yaoundé. He also commends ECCAS for the progress made in the operationalization of the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa. An effective and rapid operationalization of the Centre will require that member States make their financial contributions in a timely manner.

50. The Secretary-General commends the Committee for its active engagement to address the issue of poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking, and congratulate Gabon for its active efforts to enhance awareness and strengthen regional cooperation on these issues. It will be important for the Committee to remain seized of these matters during its future meetings and to develop a common response to combat these threats. In this regard, he encourages the Governments of States members of the Committee to build on existing efforts and to work closely with ECCAS and the African Union, as well as with UNOCA and other relevant United Nations entities, to develop a regional approach to these issues.

51. The Committee must have sufficient financial resources for its work. The Secretary-General therefore invites all States members of the Committee to financially support the activities of the Committee, which constitutes an important mechanism for confidence-building among Central African States.

52. The Secretary-General is grateful for the support provided by UNOCA, the Department of Political Affairs, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, BNUB, MINUSCA and MONUSCO, as well as by other United Nations entities in Central Africa to the work of the Committee. He looks forward to the thirty-ninth ministerial meeting of Committee, to be held in November 2014, in Bujumbura.

Annex I

[Original: French]

The N'Djamena Appeal, adopted at the thirty-seventh ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in N'Djamena from 19 to 23 December 2013

We,

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs and heads of delegation of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa,

Gathered in N'Djamena, Republic of Chad, on the occasion of the thirty-seventh ministerial meeting of the Committee;

Concerned about the continuing deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation, exacerbated by clashes between religious communities in the Central African Republic;

Mindful of the decision adopted by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union at its 380th meeting, held on 17 June 2013, establishing the African-led International Support Mission for the Central African Republic (MISCA);

Mindful of the communiqué of the third meeting of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic, held in Bangui on 8 November 2013;

Reiterating our strong commitment to the Libreville Agreement of 11 January 2013 and the N'Djamena Declaration of 18 April 2013 as the legal basis for the transition in the Central African Republic;

Referring to the Kigali Declaration of 23 August 2013;

Taking into account the risk of destabilization of the entire Central African subregion and the transformation of the Central African Republic into a haven for armed groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army;

Express our deep concern about the political, security and humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic;

Invite all Central African political actors to honour the commitments made in the N'Djamena Declaration and road map;

Call for political dialogue to be pursued with a view to holding an inclusive national dialogue and encourage religious leaders to continue their mediation and conciliation efforts between Christian and Muslim communities;

Condemn any instrumentalization of religion;

Strongly condemn all acts of violence perpetrated by the various armed groups against civilians and against the MISCA and the French forces;

Reaffirm our States' commitment to supporting the transition process in the Central African Republic and invite the States members of the Committee to participate actively in all initiatives aimed at resolving the crisis in that country;

Welcome the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolutions 2121 (2013) and 2127 (2013) on the Central African Republic;

Call upon all States members of the Committee to contribute significantly to the effective implementation of MISCA, in particular by providing the required personnel and logistical support;

Welcome the transfer of authority from the Central Africa Multinational Force to MISCA which took place on 19 December 2013;

Welcome the pledge by Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to contribute troops to MISCA;

Call upon the multilateral and bilateral partners to provide substantial financial and logistical support in respect of the humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic and to MISCA and note the provisions contained in resolution 2127 (2013) on the holding of a donors conference;

Reiterate our call for all members of the International Contact Group and the rest of the international community to honour their commitment by contributing to the trust fund for the Central African Republic;

Express our gratitude to the various partners, including France, the United States of America and the European Union, that support the efforts to stabilize and restore peace and security in the Central African Republic;

Urge the international community to continue to give due consideration and priority to the situation in the Central African Republic.

Done at N'Djamena on 22 December 2013

Annex II

[Original: French]

The Malabo Appeal on the Brazzaville forum for national reconciliation and political dialogue in the Central African Republic, adopted at the thirty-eighth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in Malabo, from 29 July to 2 August 2014

We,

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs and heads of delegation of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa,

Gathered in Malabo, Republic of Equatorial Guinea, on the occasion of the thirty-eighth ministerial meeting of the Committee,

Considering the geopolitical and security situation of States members:

- Express our deep concern about the political, security and humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic;
- Welcome the convening in Brazzaville, from 21 to 23 July 2014, of the forum for national reconciliation and political dialogue in the Central African Republic, which brought together the transitional authorities, political parties, civil society and armed groups in an international mediation process led by His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo;
- Welcome the signing by all parties of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities and violence, which is the first step in a process that is ongoing and will be further expanded in the Central African Republic;
- Urge the various actors to honour commitments and thereby foster the restoration of a climate of peace and security necessary for successful transition, with a view to restoring the normal constitutional order in the Central African Republic;
- Reaffirm the commitment of our States to supporting the transition process and to taking a more active role in all initiatives aimed at resolving the crisis in the Central African Republic;
- Invite the international community to continue to support the peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Central African Republic;
- Pay tribute, once again, to the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) and reiterate our gratitude to fraternal and friendly States for their wide-ranging assistance in the efforts to restore sustainable peace in the Central African Republic;

- Appeal to all States members of the Committee to contribute significantly to the effective transfer of MISCA to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) on 15 September 2014;
- Express our gratitude to the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States as well as regional and international partners for their strong support in the international mediation effort.

Done at Malabo on 2 August 2014

**General Assembly**

Distr.: General
29 August 2014

Original: English

Sixty-ninth session

Item 69 (c) of the provisional agenda*

**Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights
situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives**

Situation of human rights in Myanmar**Report of the Secretary-General*****Summary*

The present report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 68/242, covers the period from 11 August 2013 to 6 August 2014. During the reporting period, Myanmar continued the reform agenda while the country geared up for the 2015 elections. Parliament enacted fresh laws reflecting popular needs and ensuring popular accountability. Efforts continued for a nationwide cease fire and for building the framework for a political dialogue. The tension in Rakhine did not lessen, causing widespread concern and alarm both domestically and internationally. Myanmar assumed the chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on 1 January 2014. The United Nations continued its wide-ranging engagement with and provision of support to Myanmar.

* A/69/150.

** The present report was delayed owing to the visit of the Special Adviser from 18 to 25 August 2014, involving a high-level engagement and making on-the-spot assessments of various issues relating to the mandate of the General Assembly.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 68/242, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide his good offices and to pursue his discussions on the situation of human rights, the transition to democracy and the national reconciliation process with the Government and the people of Myanmar and to report to the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, as well as to the Human Rights Council, on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution. The report covers the period from 11 August 2013 to 6 August 2014. Separate reports by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar were issued in September 2013 (A/68/397) and April 2014 (A/HRC/25/64).
2. Three years of reforms under the leadership of President Thein Sein have yielded progress on the core issues of the General Assembly mandate, namely, in the areas of democratization, national reconciliation and development. The reporting period also witnessed progress on other key fronts, which included the continuation of normalizing Myanmar's relations with the international community along with its active participation in regional organizations. Myanmar assumed the chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 1 January 2014, under the theme "Forward in Unity to a Peaceful and Prosperous Community". On 4 March 2014, before handing over the chairmanship of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation to Nepal, Myanmar organized its third summit in Nay Pyi Taw. The country's cooperation with the European Union also expanded, including through the human rights dialogue between the European Union and Myanmar, which was held in the country on 20 May 2014. Additionally, there was continued engagement by the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes on the ground in the implementation of their respective mandates.
3. However, alongside these positive developments, the deep-seated inter-ethnic and interreligious tensions that have re-emerged around the country have given rise to further violence, loss of life, displacement of populations and destruction of property. Especially in Rakhine state, the political divide has deepened since the violent events of June and October 2012, and the rift between the Buddhist and Muslim communities further widened, while the conditions in some camps for internally displaced persons have deteriorated to intolerable levels. The United Nations and international non-governmental organizations have been affected by these rising animosities, as seen in the attack on their premises in Sittwe on 26 and 27 March 2014. These eruptions have not only resulted in increased polarization between the communities across the country along religious and communal lines, as well as increased incidents of intolerance and hate speech, but have also evoked widespread reaction within the international community. There is a concern that they could potentially undermine the reform process.
4. To help support the overall reform process and national efforts on various fronts, my Special Adviser visited Myanmar on seven occasions during the reporting period. At the same time, the United Nations continued to engage closely with Member States to help further a coordinated and constructive engagement by the international community in addressing the humanitarian, human rights and development issues, as well as in the areas of reconciliation with the ethnic groups and in bridging the communal divide, especially in the context of Rakhine. In addition to bilateral consultations in New York and Myanmar, my Special Adviser

briefed the Security Council on 19 April 2014 upon its request on the overall developments in Myanmar. Following the decision, on 26 September 2013, of my Group of Friends on Myanmar to reconfigure itself as the Partnership Group on Myanmar, I convened the first meeting of the Group on 25 April 2014, which was also attended for the first time by Myanmar, represented by the Minister for Immigration and Population Affairs, U Khin Yi. Meanwhile, preliminary contacts were also made by the Tatmadaw (defence forces) with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to initiate an exploratory discussion about a potential contribution by Myanmar in United Nations peacekeeping. On its part, the Department set out the various standards, thresholds and norms required from troop-contributing countries in order to be able to partake in United Nations peacekeeping duties.

5. In line with the rapidly changing realities and requirements in Myanmar, the United Nations Country Team is in the final stages of preparing a transition strategy aimed at supporting the country in its objective of promoting democratic governance, social cohesion and lasting peace in a sustainable, equitable and inclusive manner that respects and promotes the rights of all people within its geographic boundaries and in a manner that contributes to human security. This will include an explicit reiteration and reaffirmation by all the agencies of the core principles and values of the Organization to be applied in all of the activities of the Country Team, including: (a) the promotion of peace, security and human rights; (b) transparency; (c) impartiality and neutrality; (d) accountability; (e) conflict sensitivity; (f) participation; and (g) the commitment to ensure equity of access to all. The transition strategy will be grounded in the interconnectedness of humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and human rights issues and activities.

6. The Special Rapporteur visited the country in February 2014 and reported to the Human Rights Council thereafter. On 28 March 2014, by Human Rights resolution 25/26, the Council extended the Special Rapporteur's mandate for a further year. During the reporting period, Mr. Tomas Ojea Quintana completed his six-year term as Special Rapporteur at the end of May 2014. Ms. Yanghee Lee of the Republic of Korea was appointed as the new country mandate holder. In her new capacity, she undertook her first official visit to the country from 17 to 26 July 2014.

II. Key developments

A. Political reforms

7. During the reporting period, the gradual release of political prisoners continued in line with President Thein Sein's previous commitment to free all such prisoners by the end of 2013. A total of 73 political prisoners were released in July 2013, 69 in November 2013 and another 41 were set free in December 2013. During this time, the Special Rapporteur, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and a number of civil society organizations have continued to call for the release of all remaining prisoners, while also raising concerns about ongoing arrests and new cases of political prisoners.

8. On 2 January 2014, President Thein Sein highlighted that amending the Constitution was "necessary in order to address the national, economic and social needs of our society". He reiterated this sentiment on 2 June 2014 by stating that "we must all accept the basic rule that a living, breathing Constitution is always

evolving and changes must be made under the right conditions and at the appropriate time in harmony with society's political, economic and social needs". The amendment of the 2008 Constitution remained an important part of the internal political debate within the country.

9. After a nearly seven-month-long consultative and deliberative process, parliament established a Constitutional Review Joint Committee, comprising members from 20 political parties, in addition to representatives of the military, which submitted its report to parliament on 31 January 2014. To carry forward the process, a 31-member Amendment Implementation Committee, chaired by the Deputy Speaker of Union Parliament, U Nanda Kyaw Saw, was established. This Committee comprises 7 unelected military representatives, 14 representing the ruling, 2 from the opposition National League for Democracy and 8 representing other political parties. On 24 July, it submitted a preliminary report, which reviewed a total of 340 clauses from several sections of the 2008 Constitution, taking into consideration advice from all stakeholders, including the public, organizations, political parties and the army. The Committee is expected to submit its final recommendations to parliament for action soon.

10. Parliament held its eighth, ninth and tenth sessions and adopted key legislative measures, including an anti-money laundering bill, an anti-terrorism bill and a new association bill. On 12 August 2013, the Rule of Law and Peace and Stability Committee, chaired by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, submitted its annual report to the People's Assembly. The report identified the lack of an independent judiciary as the major obstacle to the rule of law. Since its formation in August 2012, the Committee has received 11,259 complaints about the judicial system that have yet to be reviewed.

11. Among the proposed items of legislation that have aroused strong domestic reaction and drawn international concern was a proposed package of laws covering religious conversion, inter-faith marriage, polygamy and family planning. The petition to legislate these laws was tabled in July 2013 by a coalition of monks in the Organization for the Protection of Race, Religion and Belief, headed by a member of the government-appointed National Head Monks Committee. In March 2014, President Thein Sein called for the establishment of a committee that would consider the proposals and suggest draft laws to the Parliament. One draft bill in this package relating to a proposed regulatory mechanism for religious conversions was reportedly released for public comments. Under the proposed law, any person wishing to change his or her faith would be required to register with local government departments, comprising religious affairs, immigration, women's affairs, education and administration officials, for official approval. The draft law reportedly prohibits conversion through inducement, intimidation, undue influence or pressure and also prohibits persons from applying for conversion with intent to insult, degrade or misuse any religion. Criticizing the proposed law on inter-faith marriages, opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi described it as "retrograde" and "unnecessary" and as curbing the rights of women who currently face no such restriction in law. The Special Rapporteur and other special procedures mandate holders have also spoken out against the draft law and called for its withdrawal.

12. With preparations for the proposed general election in 2015 gathering momentum, political parties and ethnic groupings across the country are positioning themselves around institutions and personalities, competing to occupy the high ground on various constitutional, political, social and developmental issues. The

Union Election Commission has also laid down stringent rules to regulate campaigning by parties. While moves for inter-party alliances and coalition-building are at the initial stage, debates have begun to erupt on issues of constitutional reform, the role of the military, power and resource-sharing, as well as on the constitutional limitations to individual political figures vying for the highest office in the land. On the question of constitutional amendments relating to the electoral process, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy has held several mass rallies to mobilize support for constitutional amendments that would facilitate her assumption of office. Her party also held consultations on this issue with other political parties.

B. Human rights

13. There has been limited progress in the continuing negotiations between OHCHR and the Government on the setting-up of a country office in Myanmar. Establishing such an office with a fully fledged mandate would enable better cooperation between Myanmar and the United Nations in advancing human rights in the country, as proven by the experience of such offices in other countries. Despite this, OHCHR has been able to engage constructively with the Government on policy dialogue, advocacy, technical cooperation, as well as capacity development and training on a range of development, humanitarian and other issues. For example, in the light of the Government's stated intention to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, OHCHR organized a training workshop for government officials on treaty ratification procedures and obligations of States parties in July 2014. OHCHR has also engaged the national police force by providing technical and capacity-building support on human rights through pilot training programmes in Yangon, Taunggyi and Mandalay. Additionally, OHCHR engaged the Government on the proposed draft laws on religious conversion and interfaith marriage, highlighting Myanmar's international human rights obligations, including as a State party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Meanwhile, on 28 March 2014, parliament adopted a law aimed at establishing a national human rights institution in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles). Ensuring the open and transparent selection and appointment of commissioners will be a key challenge in the future.

14. In furtherance of my annual report on children and armed conflict (S/2014/339), the United Nations has continued its efforts against the recruitment and use of children by the armed forces of the Government as well as armed groups in Myanmar. Seven non-State armed groups remain listed in the annexes to my report. The Peacebuilding Fund has provided initial financing to launch the implementation of the action plan established in pursuance of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005). In early December 2013, the Working Group of the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict visited Myanmar to review first-hand the action plan's status of implementation and welcomed the tangible progress achieved while stressing the need for continued efforts by all concerned. I welcome the renewed commitment of the Government to the action plan framework, led by my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the country task force

established in pursuance of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), in support of the global campaign Children, Not Soldiers to end such recruitment and use of children by Government forces by 2016. Access of the United Nations to monitoring of the armed forces has improved and 15 monitoring visits have taken place to selected operational units since August 2013, including to three border guard battalions, while access to four battalions was denied. The country task force and the Government of Myanmar have agreed to review the action plan in September 2014 with a view to accelerating compliance.

15. Meanwhile, there are concerns over increasing arrests, prosecutions and sentences against human rights activists, journalists and ordinary citizens. In early July, four journalists and an editor of the *Unity* journal were sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment with hard labour under the 1923 State Secrets Act, and charges were also brought under section 18 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act against 50 journalists who had staged a silent protest against the verdict. There are reports that those sentences are being reviewed. Although the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Act was recently amended, it did not go far enough to address concerns raised previously by the international community regarding the law being used to restrict peaceful assembly and stifle freedom of expression. Additionally, in August 2014, President Thein Sein met with the representatives of the interim press council and tried to allay the concerns of journalists. I welcome the President's initiative to reach out to address the growing anxieties within the journalistic fraternity. Ensuring respect for the fundamental freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association are the cornerstones of democracy and good governance.

16. The United Nations remains committed to furthering national efforts for gender equality and women's rights. In October 2013, the Government launched its 10-year National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women. The United Nations is providing technical support to establish legislation to prevent violence against women and develop an operational National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women. This includes support to developing a national action plan on women, peace and security. Meanwhile, incidents of sexual violence continued to be reported, especially in connection with targeted violence in Rakhine state, non-state ethnic armed conflict in Kachin and northern Shan states, as well as with conflict-affected women and girls in internally displaced persons camps, who are at risk of human trafficking (see S/2014/181).

C. National reconciliation

17. Peace negotiations between the Government and ethnic armed groups have continued, thus raising hopes for, and increasing movement towards, a negotiated end to the nation's sixty year-old armed conflict brighter than at any previous juncture. President Thein Sein has articulated his overall vision of a national reconciliation process involving a nationwide ceasefire, political dialogue and the transformation of ethnic armed groups over time into legitimate national political groupings. As the momentum of the peace process advances, the participation and involvement of parliament, political parties and civil society will become increasingly important.

18. The willingness of government negotiators and ethnic armed groups to proactively reach out to each other, as well as their relative openness and

transparency, has been impressive. The regular meetings between the top leadership of the Karen National Union and the President as well as the Commander-in-Chief are notable in this regard. At the request of the Kachin Independence Organization during peace talks with the Union Peace Working Committee in Myitkyina in August 2013, the Government agreed to a meeting of 17 ethnic armed groups in Kachin Independence Organization's headquarters in Laiza to develop a collective position on the nationwide ceasefire agreement and related issues. This was followed by a meeting in Myitkyina, in early November 2013, where the Union Peace Working Committee and the ethnic armed groups that had participated in the Laiza talks discussed how to move forward on the nationwide ceasefire draft and political dialogue.

19. These important parleys also witnessed the emergence of a Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team, a single composite negotiating team constituting representatives of the majority of the ethnic armed groups. The formation of the Team has helped the ethnic armed groups to narrow their divergent approaches and devise a common approach in the peace talks. In subsequent negotiations between the Union Peace Working Committee and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team in April 2014, this led to the evolution of a single draft text of a nationwide ceasefire. Though a final agreement has not been reached, for the first time in the country's history, issues such as power-sharing, resource-sharing and the idea of federalism have been discussed freely and openly.

20. In July 2014, members of the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team and other ethnic armed groups convened again in Laiza to further consolidate and effectively manage their position for the peace negotiations ahead. For a negotiating team built around a diverse and disparate group of organizations, the meetings highlighted the serious commitment of the Team to the peace process and the unprecedented level of coherence, unity of purpose and technical skills it had amassed over the short period of just over a year. My Special Adviser, who also attended this event, delivered a message on my behalf that underlined the need for all parties to take a "leap of faith" at this critical juncture.

21. While the discussions are at a preliminary stage and there is much more to be done to shore up mutual confidence on all sides, these developments have been a promising indication of progress. The peace process stands at a threshold and all sides have a unique opportunity to reflect the real aspirations of the people rather than any narrow agenda. The engagement of the Tatmadaw in the peace negotiations during the past months has also helped to instil greater confidence in the process. This will need to be encouraged and sustained.

22. Meanwhile, a Peace Donor Support Group, led by Norway and comprising Australia, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank, has been working in tandem with the Government as well as the ethnic armed groups and the technical bodies connected with the peace process. The Peacebuilding Fund has also contributed to supporting these entities and the Myanmar Peace Centre in enhancing their capacities and enabling them to function better as platforms from which the Government and ethnic groups can hold informal and continuous contact.

23. Regrettably, tension continued in some areas, particularly in Kachin state, where a 17-year long ceasefire was breached in 2011. This has been troubling not

least because the Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army is one of the stronger ethnic armed groups. While a series of negotiations have led to de-escalation, a formal ceasefire has not yet been signed. Against the backdrop of increased tensions in the border areas of Kachin, parleys between the Government and Kachin Independence Organization representatives from 8 to 10 October 2013 resulted in an agreement to form a Joint Monitoring Committee. Discussions were also held on provisions to de-escalate hostilities, establish technical teams to coordinate plans for the return and resettlement of displaced persons and cooperate on pilot projects in four villages along the Myitkina-Bhamo road. However, owing to a number of factors, including the continued suspicion and mistrust between the army and the Kachin Independence Army at the local level, efforts to implement the agreements have been undermined by renewed clashes and heightened tensions between the Tatmadaw and the Kachin Independence Army. On 13 May 2014, the Union Peace Working Committee and Kachin Independence Organization held bilateral talks in Myitkyina, where commitments from both sides on de-escalating the conflict were made. They also agreed to establish a mechanism for better mutual communication, prevent further violent clashes until the formation of a Joint Monitoring Committee, and work with the media to play a constructive role to help advance the peace process. While efforts to de-escalate hostilities have been challenging, the determination and flexibility demonstrated by the respective sides in the greater interest of peace have been commendable.

24. The lack of substantive participation of women in the peace negotiations continues to be a challenge for all parties in the peace process. While there are many women contributing at a technical level, there is little progress on including women in the negotiating teams. The United Nations has raised this point with all stakeholders.

25. In the light of ongoing skirmishes in Kachin and Shan states, the United Nations has continued to voice concern over the safety and security of civilians and called on all sides to exercise restraint. Access to humanitarian assistance for civilians affected by conflict has also been a priority and despite calls for all sides to exercise restraint, regular clashes continued to affect civilians. An estimated 100,000 people remain displaced in Kachin and Shan states as a result of the fighting that started in June 2011. Many of these internally displaced persons have been displaced for nearly three years, while sporadic fighting adds to new and renewed displacements.

26. Over 50 per cent of the 100,000 internally displaced persons are located in areas beyond Government control, where addressing the needs of those affected is affected by access and logistical challenges. During this period, international humanitarian organizations increased their presence in Kachin to complement and augment the assistance provided by local non-governmental organizations that have been the backbone of humanitarian assistance there. Some 20 international humanitarian organizations are now providing assistance throughout Kachin, and although access to affected areas is still subject to Government permissions, cross-line missions have become more regular, with 28 missions between August 2013 and June 2014. These missions have reached several areas where high numbers of internally displaced persons are in urgent and protracted need of humanitarian relief. Adequate and suitable land to shelter internally displaced persons and to start resettlement programmes continues to hamper both humanitarian and recovery efforts, although the

Government recently facilitated the resettlement of 113 households from camps outside Myitkyina to a newly built village.

27. Since May 2013, following the request of the parties, my Special Adviser, together with China's Special Envoy, Mr. Wang Yingfan, has participated in the peace negotiations between the Union Peace Working Committee and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team and between Union Peace Working Committee and Kachin Independence Organization as an official observer. My Special Adviser has continued to engage regularly with senior Government officials, the Tatmadaw and other stakeholders in the ongoing peace negotiations, including the worrisome situation in Kachin and northern Shan states. He travelled to the headquarters of the Kachin Independence Organization in Laiza in August 2013, April 2014 and July 2014 to hold dialogues with the top leadership of the Kachin Independence Organization and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team on the peace process. He also made several visits to Nay Pyi Taw to meet with the Government and military, and held talks with the Kachin state government in Myitkyina. In addition, he continued a high-level dialogue on the need to facilitate unhampered access for humanitarian agencies.

28. Additionally, my Special Adviser continued to hold informal consultations with all stakeholders, including civil society representatives of various ethnic groups, to help build greater trust and cooperation among the diverse national actors. I shall continue to lend the assistance of my good offices to Myanmar's peace process to help bolster cooperation between the Government and ethnic armed groups. The national ownership of the peace process in Myanmar and the responsibility and commitment showed by stakeholders on all sides clearly demonstrate the strong determination of the people of Myanmar to realize their aspirations for peace and reconciliation after generations of internal strife. I would like to convey my strong encouragement and respect to these efforts and to everyone involved in the peace process and to urge them to make the final crucial compromises needed to reach a nationwide ceasefire. This will enable Myanmar to embark very soon on a process of political dialogue that could determine the contours of the nation's future definitively. The United Nations will stay committed to the peace process throughout and contribute to the political dialogue envisioned by the stakeholders.

D. Socioeconomic development

29. In September 2013, President Thein Sein announced that the second half of his mandate would focus on rural development and improving livelihoods and basic needs for the people through the provision of drinking water, water for irrigation, electricity, better communication facilities, job opportunities and better agricultural programmes. The announcement was made against a backdrop of low social indicators, as evidenced by the 2014 Human Development Report, which ranked Myanmar 150 out of 187 countries, and by reports of a lack of significant improvement in the living conditions of the majority of the population and a growing divide between rich and poor.

30. The Government of Myanmar conducted a population and housing census from 30 March to 10 April 2014 with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other donors. The previous census was conducted in 1983. A National Advisory Committee was established to advise the Government on various aspects

of the census, comprised of civil society organizations, ethnic and religious representatives, Government ministries and United Nations agencies, while an International Technical Advisory Board of 15 international census experts advised the Government to ensure credibility of the census and its compliance with international guidelines. At the invitation of the Government, an independent team of international and national census experts observed the census enumeration across the country. They found that, overall, the census was conducted in line with international guidelines in all parts of the country, with the exception of parts of Rakhine state. In Rakhine state, despite assurances that all respondents would be able to self-identify on ethnicity and religion, the Government reversed this position and eventually decided against allowing the predominantly Muslim community to self-identify as "Rohingya". This last-minute change was ascribed to security concerns in order to avert civil unrest and inter-communal tensions. Also, in Kachin and Kayah states, a total of 237 census enumeration areas, where conflict continues, were not enumerated. Data processing and analysis are currently under way at the Ministry of Immigration and Population, with preliminary results expected to be released by August 2014, followed by a second data release expected in May or June of 2015 and thematic analyses of the data made available towards the end of 2015.

31. Conducting a census in a highly volatile situation with internal conflict and communal tensions has been controversial. While UNFPA will continue to provide advice and support to the Government in its effort to encourage greater transparency and trust-building during the remaining stages of the census exercise, Myanmar's international partners must remain conscious of the diverse and difficult transitions the country is going through and the continuing need for caution in making policy recommendations. While seeking to help the country advance, we will need also to guard against causing unintended harm. We will need, above all, to recognize the country's complex ethnic and religious fabric and its history.

32. Myanmar's economy is reported to have grown by 7.3 per cent in the period 2012-2013 and is predicted to grow by 8.5 per cent in the period 2014-2015. Much of this growth was driven by increased gas production, construction, services and foreign direct investment (FDI). Key to this result have been the reforms aimed at creating macroeconomic management infrastructure and capacity as well as a modernized financial sector. A favourable outlook will depend on progress on these initiatives, the completion of the transition of the Central Bank of Myanmar to an autonomous institution, an enhanced capacity to support macroeconomic stability as well as a modernized financial sector, which would improve access to credit.

33. While pursuing wide-ranging economic reforms, the capacity of the authorities to implement them and absorb international assistance was stretched. Though an FDI law was enacted in 2012, its implementing rules have lacked clarity and caused uncertainty about the protection of investment. The flow of foreign investments has thus been slower than anticipated. The World Bank ranked Myanmar 182 out of 189 countries this year in its annual survey on the ease of doing business around the world. The 2014 Myanmar Business Survey highlighted that corruption, the lack of skilled labour and scarcity of technology remained the main obstacles to the economic development in the country.

34. Much of the accumulated pledged amount of FDI has targeted the oil, gas and power sectors, followed by manufacturing, mining and tourism. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development figures, FDI flows reached

\$2.621 billion in 2013 from \$2.243 billion in 2012. Foreign companies won tenders for oil and gas exploration and nationwide telecommunications licenses were granted to two foreign telecommunication companies. The Kyaukphyu-Kunming natural gas pipeline, also known as the Shwe Gas pipeline, became fully operational. The Government also developed a comprehensive strategy for a special economic zone project in Rakhine state and opened bids for its development. Similar progress was registered in the Dawei zone and the Thilawa zone.

35. In many of these projects, there were strong public protests against land grabbing and adverse environmental impacts and demands for proper compensation. Following earlier protests at the Letpadaung copper mine and the issuance of the report of the investigation commission, a committee was established to implement its recommendations. The committee suggested measures to ensure that the state and local populations adequately benefited from the projects. It also returned some of the confiscated land to farmers, though land grabbing remains a problematic issue across the country. The Farmland Investigation Commission, established by parliament in July 2012, continued its work throughout the past year. In September 2013, it referred 745 cases of alleged land grabs to the Land Use Management Committee and, in February 2014, the Commission set September 2014 as a deadline for the Government to resolve pending cases of land grabbing. In a significant development, Myanmar's application to become a candidate for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative was approved on 2 July. This commits the country to extensive disclosure and improved accountability in the measurement of oil, gas and minerals and to publish its first Initiative report within an 18-month period.

36. Implementation of the 2013 Nay Pyi Taw Accord for Effective Development Cooperation and the Government's Framework for Economic and Social Reforms continues at a brisk pace. Seventeen Government-led sector working groups are now operational, which have brought together the Government, development partners, international non-governmental organizations and civil society to facilitate development cooperation at the sector level. In January, Myanmar held its second development cooperation forum under the theme of accelerating actions for progress through enhancing inclusive coordination. Following last year's trend, more Member States cancelled debts owed by Myanmar and provided grants and increased cooperation in support of reform in the country. At the end of the first European Union-Myanmar task force to support the country's economic reform and democratic transition, Myanmar emerged as one of the leading beneficiaries of European Union development cooperation in Asia. While still subject to final approval of the European Union, the cooperation could bring in \$90 million per annum, a 20 per cent increase from current levels. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank announced support to development programmes with the aim of improving the standard of living and reducing rural poverty.

37. While recognizing general progress in the reforms, some Member States have renewed sanctions against Myanmar during the past year. The European Union suspended its sanctions for another year, with the exception of an arms embargo on equipment that could be used for internal repression. On other fronts, an anti-corruption law was approved in July 2013, and in February 2014, the President proposed forming an independent commission comprising respected government staff without direct affiliation to the legislative, administrative and judicial branches to tackle corruption in the country.

E. Rakhine state

38. The situation in Rakhine state continues to cause widespread concern and alarm both domestically and internationally. Sporadic violence in the state continued during the reporting period, including on 29 September 2013, when violence in Thandwe township left seven people dead, 480 displaced and numerous homes and businesses destroyed. On 2 November 2013, more violence followed in Pauktaw, where four people died and at least three were seriously injured. In early January 2014, violent incidents were reported in Du Chee Yar Tan village of Maungdaw township. Reports of the disappearance of a police officer and alleged killings of several local Muslims caused concern within the international community.

39. During his visit to the country in January, my Special Adviser met with Government leaders, including Vice President U Sai Mauk Kham, who also chairs the Committee for Stability and Development of Rakhine state, and drew attention to these developments. In line with the core principle of the United Nations underlining the protection of civilian lives and the safeguarding basic human rights, my Special Adviser urged the authorities to take firm action against the perpetrators of targeted attacks and to ensure security for members of all communities. Regarding the incidents in Maungdaw township in Rakhine, an initial investigation report by the local United Nations team highlighted the strong possibility of violence having targeted a large number of Muslim residents of the area. This report, when brought to the attention of the authorities, was rejected as unfounded. Meanwhile, the Government set up four related inquiries, including one established by President Thein Sein, none of which found evidence of mass killings of members of the Muslim community. The United Nations reiterated that its report was based on tested methodologies and on facts reported by credible witnesses. The different versions have remained unreconciled to date.

40. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) reflected its concern about the situation in Rakhine state and elsewhere in the country by despatching a ministerial delegation to Myanmar in November 2013. A joint communiqué released during the visit addressed humanitarian issues affecting the population in Rakhine state. In May, OIC appointed Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar, former Foreign Minister of Malaysia, as its Special Envoy to Myanmar to explore further cooperation with regard to Rakhine state. Myanmar has indicated its readiness to work constructively with the OIC Special Envoy.

41. At the end of March, organized groups of Rakhine individuals selectively targeted, attacked and looted the premises and properties of the United Nations and a number of international non-governmental organizations in Sittwe. These acts resulted in property damages of over \$1 million and the temporary relocation of some 300 aid workers, as well as a month-long suspension of aid support to affected local populations. The ostensible provocation for these attacks was the removal from the premises of an international aid agency of a Buddhist flag planted by protesters demonstrating against moves to allow "self-identification" of the "Rohingya" population in Rakhine state in the nationwide census. In the disturbances that followed, an 11-year-old girl succumbed to bullet injuries as security forces sought to quell unruly mobs. Several United Nations staff, international and national, had to be relocated and additional police presence deployed for their protection.

42. On 30 March, in a telephone conversation with President Thein Sein, I drew attention to the responsibility of the Government of Myanmar to respect the inviolability of United Nations personnel and premises in the country. I also underlined the need for the United Nations to strengthen its future presence in Rakhine state to address the significant humanitarian, human rights and development needs. In doing this, the United Nations would seek to be mindful of security considerations and take particular care to ensure that our approach does not unintentionally exacerbate tensions in an already complex and volatile situation. Promising firm action against the perpetrators, President Thein Sein set in motion a series of measures for restoring order and for emergency coordination of the priority humanitarian work being done by the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations. Local authorities have continued to work with the Country Team and others to ensure both the early resumption of their normal functioning as well as adequate protection for all members of United Nations agencies and humanitarian aid agencies. In addition, the United Nations continues to calibrate its presence and programmes in Rakhine to reinforce its neutrality and transparency in order to reach those most in need.

43. By the end of April, most international humanitarian organizations had resumed activities. However, the previous February suspension of Médecins Sans Frontières and the suspension of Malteser International following the March attacks remained. On 23 July 2014, the Government announced that Médecins Sans Frontières and other health organizations could resume activities in the state, although as of early August, modalities for restarting Médecins Sans Frontières programmes continued to be discussed. While around 70 per cent of Sittwe-based staff have been able to resume their work, insufficient housing and office space, as well as continued opposition from the local population, have constrained full resumption of activities.

44. The combined effects of the March attacks and reduced humanitarian health capacity from mobile health teams have added to the state's precarious health situation. However, with new capacity added through health teams under the Ministry of Health umbrella, monthly consultations have been brought back to pre-attack levels, although quality of care and the handling of emergency referrals remain serious concerns. Services for the vulnerable in hard-to-reach internally displaced persons camps and the northern part of Rakhine state remain precarious, and the dearth of health partners on the ground makes it a major challenge to monitor mortality and morbidity to present a clear picture of needs and gaps.

45. On 1 August 2014, President Thein Sein called upon the people in Rakhine state to cooperate with the Government and aid groups to implement the plan in order to bring peace and development to the state. In his meetings with various national leaders, including with the Speaker of parliament, my Special Adviser has repeatedly underscored to the authorities the importance of implementing strong measures to prevent and punish hate speech and incitement of inter-communal violence. My Special Adviser has also actively reached out to civil society groups in Myanmar and encouraged them to pursue various initiatives to counter hate speech at the grass-roots level. From 30 November to 1 December 2013, he participated in a civil society forum on peace, national harmony and State-building, held in Yangon. The event provided an opportunity for the President and Government to engage widely with civil society organizations on nation-building and for community representatives, including those of religious bodies, to engage on

addressing communal tensions. Separately, a workshop organized under the auspices of the Dangerous Speech Project in Yangon from 17 to 19 June 2014 brought together participants from various regions of Myanmar, including Rakhine state, as well as from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Egypt, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Kenya and Nigeria. The workshop allowed for a discussion of the role of inflammatory speech in conflict and the respect for freedom of speech.

46. While the Government of Myanmar has repeatedly made strong statements of actions to be taken against perpetrators of violence, these have not been conveyed with sufficient firmness to the local level. I would like to reiterate my call to the country's top leaders to issue a joint appeal to the people of Myanmar to urgently abjure all acts of violence and hate speech, to respect the rule of law and promote interfaith harmony and understanding.

47. I welcome the recent establishment by Presidential decree of a centre for diversity and national harmony in Yangon. This centre was set up with the overall objective of bridging the gap between communities, promoting harmony and peaceful coexistence and establishing early warning systems and building capacity among government bodies and civil society with the goal of detecting areas of potential tension and friction among the communities. This initiative is among the various projects supported by the Peacebuilding Fund in Myanmar and has already begun to work on bringing together community leaders inside the country to restore dialogue and discussion among them. Critical to this discussion is the need to address the root problems underlying the communal polarization through a realistic and substantive solution to the issue of status and citizenship for the vulnerable populations now living in the internally displaced persons camps and elsewhere. An effective process of verification and citizenship will be an important step towards that end.

48. The appointment of a new Chief Minister in Rakhine state has come at a critical moment. Meeting with the different communities of the state on 26 June 2014, Chief Minister Maung Maung Ohn reassured the people of the state of his commitment to improving the overall economic condition and living standards of the local population as well as restoring stability to the region. His appointment coincided with the announcement of the Government's Action Plan for Rakhine. Recommendations of the Rakhine Commission of Inquiry in 2013, together with the Rakhine state Action Plan (2014-2017), provide the basis for a solid foundation upon which to restore fundamental human rights in Rakhine state regardless of race, language or religion. The Chief Minister's proactive engagement with the United Nations and the community of international non-governmental organizations has been a welcome development. While doing this, I hope the governmental authorities and agencies at the central and local levels are able to allay the concerns of the international community about the situation in Rakhine state. This should include moving forward the process of verification and citizenship for the "Rohingyas", including the displaced and addressing the long-standing discrimination against the Rohingya community within a mechanism that conforms to the law of the land as well as recognized humanitarian and human rights principles.

49. The past trend of risky migration patterns of the Rohingya population to other countries continues. An estimated 86,000 people have departed in irregular boat movements since June 2012. This includes more than 16,000 people in the second half of 2012, some 55,000 in 2013 and nearly 15,000 from January to April 2014.

While it is difficult to gather reliable information given the clandestine nature of these movements, 615 people are reported to have died in 2013 compared with 730 during the second half of 2012, the decrease being attributed to the use of larger, more stable cargo boats. Smuggling networks associated with these movements are reported to be thriving. Accounts from people surviving the journey talk of horrific conditions during and after the long, dangerous sea trip, including reports of people being held for ransom in smugglers' camps in the jungles and hills near the Thailand-Malaysia border.

50. ASEAN Member States continued to view the communal violence in Myanmar and the underlying causes as an internal matter. However, the regular outflow of refugees fleeing to neighbouring ASEAN countries is complicating this stance, particularly at a time when Myanmar occupies the chairmanship of ASEAN. Most countries of the region would prefer that a consultative and consensus-based process be taken, rather than a broader international approach. Widespread concern among some Member States, human rights and civil society groups as well as within OIC reinforces the need to identify avenues to address the root causes related to citizenship and statelessness, as well as the humanitarian and human rights issues connected with the plight of the Rohingya.

51. Though more than two years have elapsed since the outbreak of the violence in Rakhine state and its spread to other parts of the country, there has been little progress in resolving the underlying issues that initially gave rise to communal tensions and ensuring accountability for those carrying out criminal acts. The displaced communities have, for the most part, not been able to return to their former homes. Legal proceedings against the perpetrators remain blocked and the suffering and complaints of the affected people, especially the Muslim communities in the internally displaced persons camps, whose basic rights have been severely curtailed, remain largely unassuaged.

52. A curfew was imposed in Mandalay after an outbreak of violence in early July 2014 that killed two people and injured dozens. The authorities responded quickly by deploying security forces to restore law and order and mobilizing public support from members of the different communities in order to prevent an escalation of the situation. In the wake of the violence in Mandalay, the President in a public address highlighted that "Since our country is multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious, it is only through embracing harmonious relationships with each other that we will nurture democratic practices and achieve a developed and open society".

III. Observations

53. The Government of President Thein Sein is now in the fourth year of its tenure. Myanmar has a vigorously functioning parliament, active engagement and public debate by parties and civil society organizations on a wide range of issues of national concern, with open and relatively unfettered involvement of the media. Over 10 sessions held in the span of three years, parliament has met separately as well as in joint sessions and considered over 100 bills covering a range of national concerns. The way parliament has exercised its authority, reflecting popular needs and ensuring accountability, has been quite impressive. Nevertheless, it is clear that the process is still evolving and more institutional reforms are needed.

54. As efforts continue for a nationwide ceasefire and for building the framework for a political dialogue, my Special Adviser will work to provide necessary support from the United Nations on critical issues in accordance with the comfort level of, at the request of and in agreement with all sides concerned. Despite the strong differences that remain, I am persuaded that there is enough goodwill and sincerity on all sides to bring the negotiations to a fruitful conclusion.

55. A major test for the new system will be how these changes meet the political interests and aspirations of the country's diverse political, ethnic and religious groups and how effectively these groups build and legitimize new national institutions. One important event in this context will be the 2015 general election, which will be one of the elements in assessing the state of the democratic reform in Myanmar. As a first step, addressing the legitimate concerns of various political parties about the restrictions and conditionalities imposed by the Election Commission will be important. The provision of technical electoral support from the United Nations to the Government will be determined by an electoral needs assessment mission, which will be conducted in the near future by the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs, following a request from Myanmar's Union Election Commission.

56. Revisiting the 2008 Constitution will be an important issue on the political agenda. Notwithstanding the current controversies over the amendment of technical provisions such as article 59(f) and article 436, which set the guidelines for the appointment of the President and for amending the constitution respectively, if the power structures are to be truly democratized, it will be important to address the power-sharing arrangements with ethnic groups within a federal governance structure. Also crucial will be the question of finding a stable and phased manner to place under civilian structures those various layers of Government currently under military control. Clearly, any amended Constitution must provide non-discriminatory access for all contenders to top Government posts. Equally critical will be to ensure that the evolving democratic culture does not aggravate confrontation between communities or ethnic groups but rather be open and inclusive.

57. While the general momentum of the political reforms has remained on a positive trajectory and shown some promising signs, opposition parties and leaders, as well as civil society, have complained about the narrowing of democratic space in Myanmar. While these critiques will inevitably be seen in the broader context of the progress of reform in the country and the political climate surrounding the upcoming elections, continued legislative reform in line with international standards and improvements in functioning of some key institutions, such as the Union Election Commission, will be necessary.

58. Progress made on the development front will have direct implications for political stability, since meeting public expectations is at the core of any democratic process. The leveraging of Myanmar's developmental agenda to address key challenges of fighting poverty, bringing jobs to its young people and modernizing its structure of governance while building an open market economy with wider linkages across the outside world will be an essential pillar for the country's democratization process.

59. While human rights concerns and the communal violence of the past few years have, at times, overshadowed the progress made by the country, the political transition in Myanmar and the commitment of its Government towards a strong

developmental agenda have on the whole held ground. This commitment to a democratic future is shared as much by the Government as by the Parliament, the Defence Forces and the Opposition, even if in varied nuances. As President Thein Sein transitions into his final year in office and the country prepares for the elections in 2015, I believe the international community should continue to provide support to Myanmar along this path of democratization, reform, respect for human rights and stable economic growth and towards a more harmonious and inclusive society.

60. The understanding and support extended to my Special Adviser in his efforts to reach out to all relevant stakeholders in Myanmar has been invaluable. While reaffirming the need for continued constructive engagement between the United Nations and Myanmar through a fully fledged country programme, I would like to invite Member States to assess the continuation of my good offices during the coming year as the country moves towards the decisive phase of the 2015 elections, fulfilling its reform agenda and an entirely new phase of national reconciliation. Taking note of the expression of support from Member States for my good offices and recognizing that the United Nations can offer much constructive assistance in maintaining and reinforcing the positive trajectory of the reform process, I urge the international community to positively consider recalibrating the mandate of my Special Adviser to focus on the areas of democratic reform, peace process support and the strengthening intercommunal cohesion.